

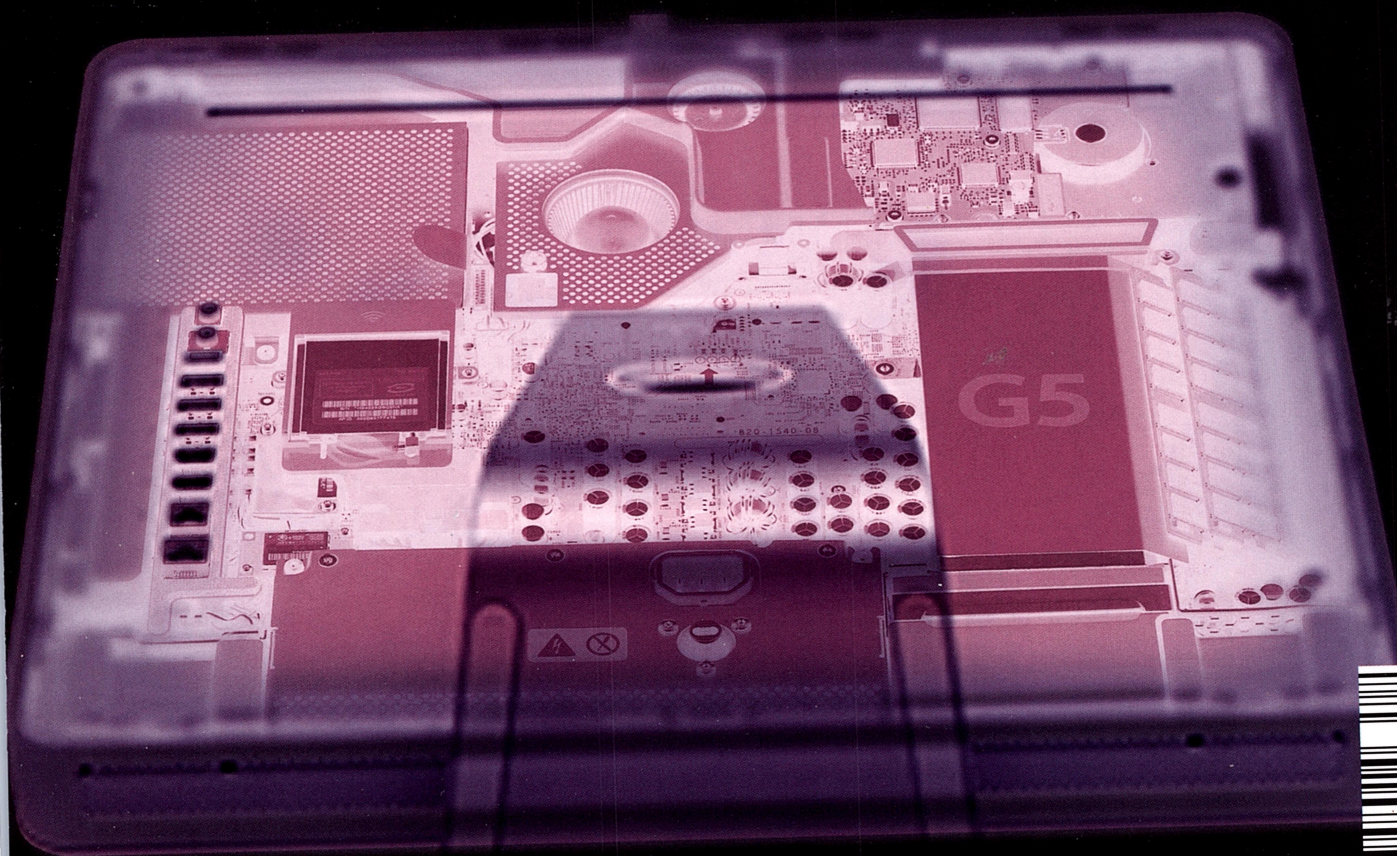
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AUST. MAC WORLD
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A U S T R A L I A N

Macworld

Inside the new iMac

HOW TO ■ Use Photoshop like a pro ■ Control iTunes over the web ■ Program Lego MindStorms ■ Get more out of the Keychain ■ Make your own CD covers



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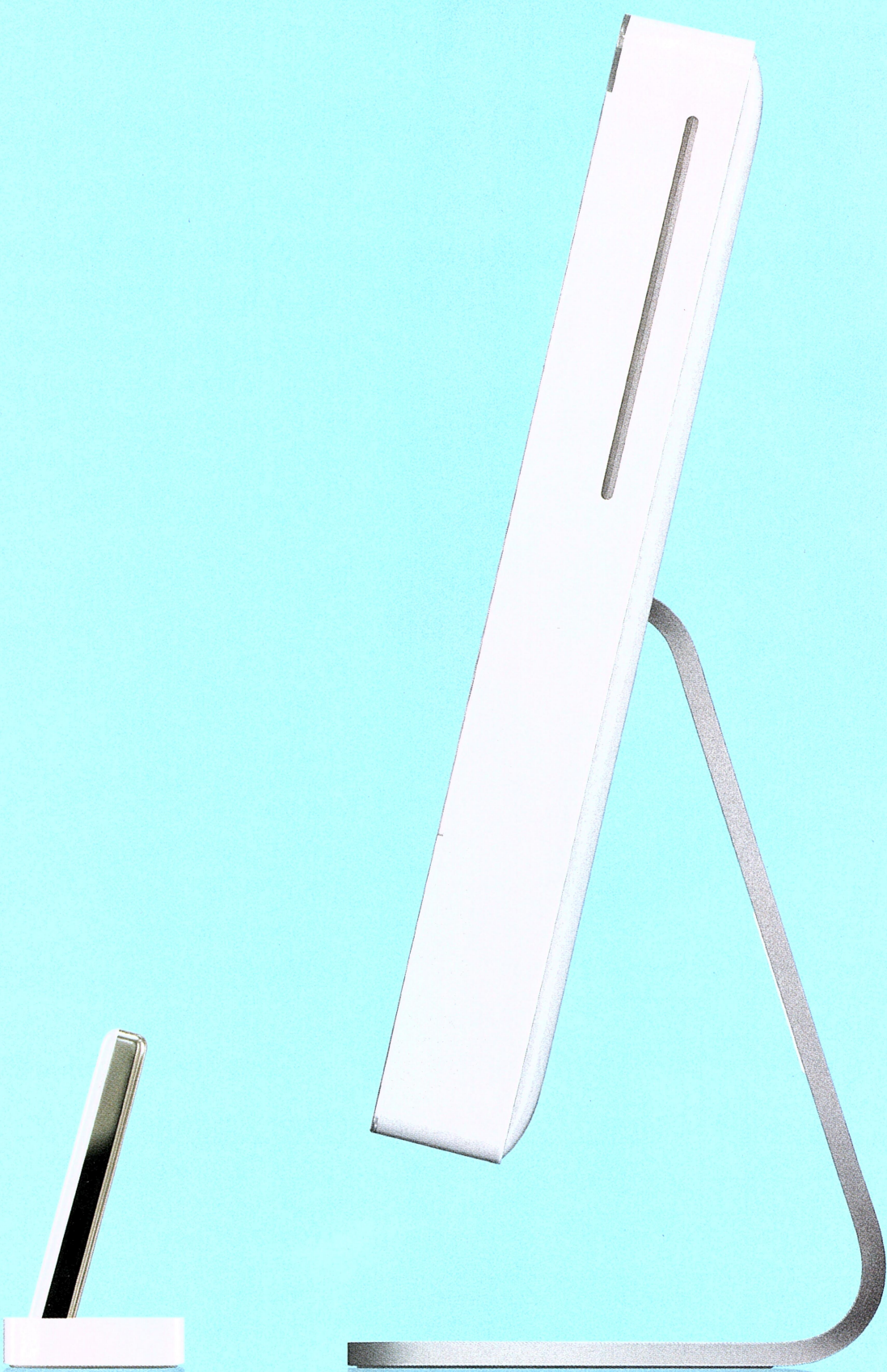




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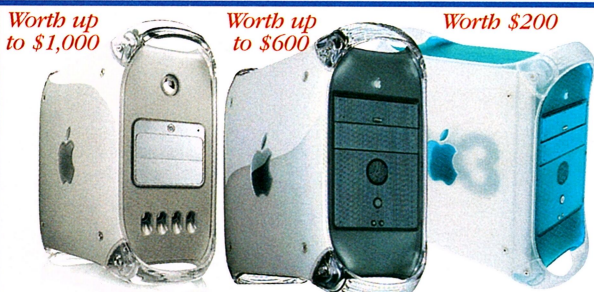
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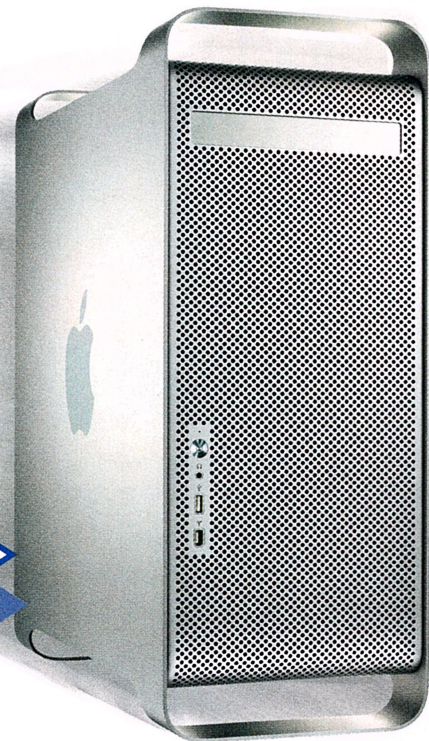

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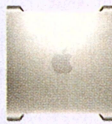
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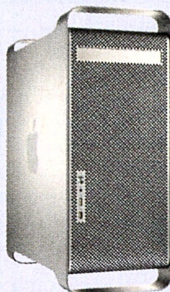
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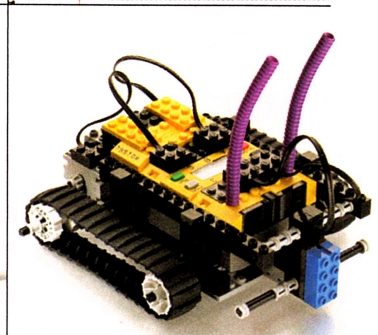
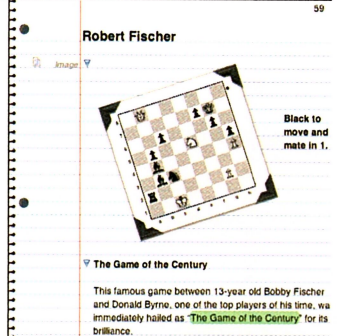
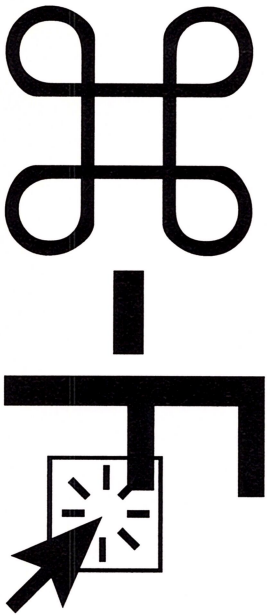
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Focus.

030

Inside the iMac G5.

By Jonathan Seff.

Take guided tour through the ins and outs of the latest version of Apple's all-in-one desktop and discover that clever design is more than just skin deep.

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Photoshop may rule the roost for image-manipulation, but it's not the only game in town. You'd be amazed what you can do with very little money — or even none at all.

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The iPod is truly an industry in itself, as this quick sampling of a few new gadgets attests.

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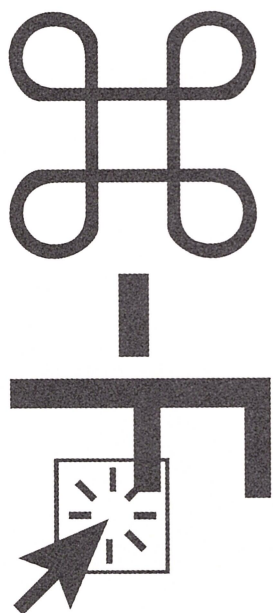
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Tips and queries from our readers.



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MAC BROWSERS



Buzz.

Apple goes a-courting 017

Apple finds itself in court on several fronts this month, with Honeywell filing suit over a patent on LCD screens and the battle with RealPlayer over iPod intensifying. There's also that stoush with the Beatles, isn't there?

Also this issue: PalmOne announces a new high-end PDA and an updated smart-phone — Bluetooth at last!

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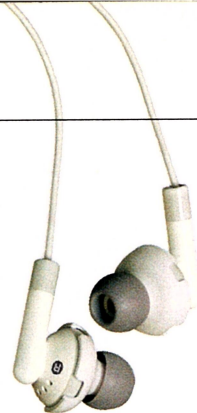
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Test drive.

LG GSA 5120D



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LaCie 8× FireWire Slim



Sony DRX700UL



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AMW Lab: DVD burners

077

Dual layer still in its infancy

MacDraft PE 5.5



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Pro app reaches out to consumers

EyeTV 200



EyeHome



TV to Mac crossover

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Getting better all the time

NoteBook 1.2



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AirPort Express



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Touches down in the living room

VueScan 8.0



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Alternative to generic scanning software

SoundSoap Pro 1.0



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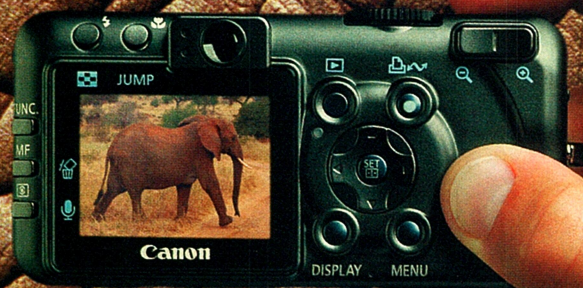
Professionally scrubs audio

Imation Disc Stakka



089

Great idea, needs a bit of polish



Fits it all in.

Canon's PowerShot S70 digital camera features a wide-angle lens that lets you fit more into your photos. This lens is equivalent to a 28-100mm lens in a 35mm camera. Traditionally a high-resolution wide-angle zoom lens wouldn't fit in a camera this small. It was made possible by Canon's new UA lens technology. The S70 gives you complete creative control by letting you choose your own shutter and ISO speeds, aperture and white balance. You can also choose to shoot in either JPEG or RAW modes. All proof that the S70 truly does fit everything in. canon.com.au/digitalimage 1800 021 167

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From the Macintosh scene to the magazine.

By Matthew JC. Powell.

**Hot Links**

auto.howstuffworks.com/transmission1.htm
How a manual transmission works

A certain intelligence.

A few weeks ago I attended a conference at which members of the media were invited to mingle in formal and informal contexts with representatives of various aspects of the IT industry. It was different to most such conferences in that normally there will be only one vendor, or that vendor and a few of its select partners touting a party line. At this conference there were multiple vendors, affording a rare opportunity to examine trends across the industry and to talk to vendors who, normally, wouldn't have much to say to *Australian Macworld*.

So it was that, over tea and banana bread between conference sessions, I found myself chatting with someone from Fujitsu PC and another journalist most strongly associated with magazines covering the Wintel duopoly.

The conversation was all going rather swimmingly when the Fujitsu person asked me "so what made you become a Mac person?" It's an interesting question, actually, because for most of my computing life I've been relatively platform-agnostic (even when editing *AMW* in the mid-1990s) and only in the last five years or so have been dedicated exclusively to the Mac.

I explained that the shift occurred when I was editing *PC Buyer* magazine. At the time I was using both a Mac running OS 8.x and a Dell PC running Windows 98. At some point – and it may have been several points – I realised that I spent a lot of time with the PC futzing about keeping it working, while the Mac allowed me to spend more of my time getting my work done.

The PC journalist, hearing this, remarked "well, it takes a certain intelligence to use Windows".

I didn't bother to respond at the time, mainly because I felt he'd proved my point. For one thing, resorting to schoolyard tactics like impugning my intelligence indicated that he had no better response. I could have said "same to you" or "takes one to know one", but didn't feel it would achieve much.

For another thing, saying that something requires more intelligence/effort/patience/strength/wisdom/whatever is equivalent to saying it's harder. Which was exactly my point. Chalk up a victory to the Mac guy.

One way of looking at this argument is to draw a parallel with cars. Some people like to drive a car with a manual transmission, other people prefer an automatic. A manual transmission requires you to know at all times what gear your car is in, and what gear you need to be in to achieve the next task you wish to perform – going over a hill, turning a corner, etc. To get into

the appropriate gear, you have to lower the clutch, move the gearstick, raise the clutch, keeping the gas or brake at exactly the right level so it doesn't sputter to a halt while doing so. An automatic transmission does it for you.

Some people like to do all that stuff. They feel they get better performance and a more satisfying driving experience by controlling the gears themselves. Other people just want to get from A to B.

This is not a great analogy, and I'll tell you why.

Windows is like a car with a manual transmission. At all times you are required to have great knowledge of how all the bits are interacting. If anything goes wrong the OS has few resources to save itself – the user must go into rescue mode, or call the nearest tech-head.

A modern Mac, on the other hand, isn't necessarily like an automatic. Sure, if you just need to get something done, you can start it up, do your stuff and go. If, however, you feel like tweaking, you can open up a Terminal window and stare into the maw of full-blown Unix. Mac OS X provides as much power, if not more, to the tweekers as Windows ever could.

The thing is, it doesn't require you to tweak. It's just there if you want it.

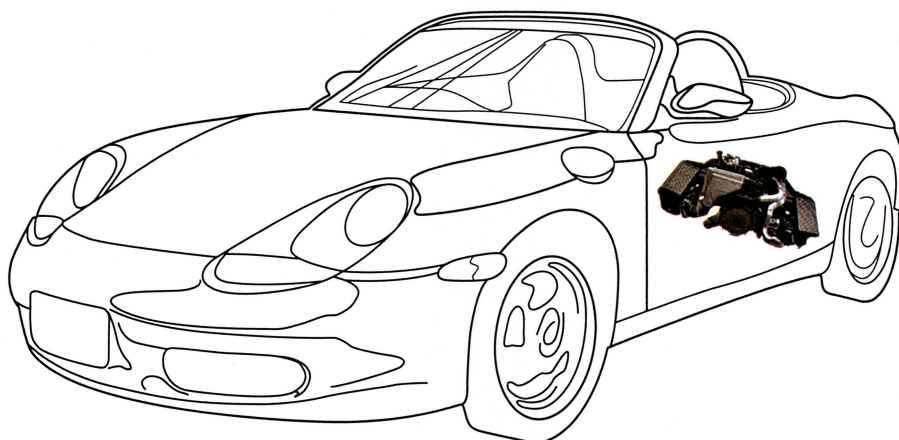
I know this magazine has a large number of readers who are keen technology buffs and love to get "under the hood" as our American friends say. The response to James Murty's Unix projects has been testament to that.

A lot of our readers, however, don't want to worry about the Unix, they just want to be productive with their computers. Mac OS X lets them do that too. It's like a car with two transmissions (although that would be rather silly – I told you this wasn't a good analogy).

Windows users, have to spend a lot of their time fiddling with arcane settings and installing frequent patches and updates to keep their machines going. Many of them, no doubt, feel that the time they spend doing that fiddling improves the quality of the results they get when they do eventually manage to get some work done. They probably feel a great sense of accomplishment.

It takes a certain intelligence to recognise when technology is wasting your time. ☹

Matthew JC. Powell



FROM ONE HIGH POWERED ENGINE TO ANOTHER.



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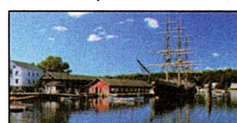


Before



After

***Adaptive Colour, Contrast Enhancement**



Before



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† \$55 Telstra ADSL line disconnection fee applies if broadband service is cancelled within first 3 months. Full terms and conditions at ozemail.com.au.

Your magazine, your forum.



For the next three issues, Conexus (02 9975 2799) will be giving away a pair of Mentor RCH100 professional surround-sound headphones valued at \$289 to the *Australian Macworld* reader who sends in the most interesting or provocative letter.

The headsets in the Mentor range surround each ear with six independent chambers, creating the sensation that each sound is coming from a different direction. This unique physical design distinguishes the Mentor range from attempts to imitate surround sound using software alone.

The Mentor headphones also include Safebass Technology, which protects the listener's ears by combining audio signals from the right-front and left-front audio channels and converging the bass signals into a more moderate level.

The Mentor range includes headphones that are designed for use with Macs and PCs and with DVD players, gaming consoles and digital TVs. They are available in the professional (330g) form factor for maximum comfort and sound separation, and in the deluxe (140g) form factor for maximum portability. The RCH-100 provides a built-in AC97 decoder, so you just plug it into your Mac's USB port. OS X is required. 📧

Satellite so far away

■ I live just 7.2km from a major country town. For several years I have been battling Telstra to get a broadband service to my home office. No ADSL, no ISDN. Every month or so, I receive an e-mail from Telstra offering me a "great new deal on broadband", but I have committed two sins: I live 200 metres too far from the local telephone exchange; and my Telstra copper line is so crappy I can't get a decent service. So, no ASDL..

With much fanfare the Federal Government announces HiBIS -- a subsidy for those poor unfortunates unable to access broadband by normal means to access it via satellite. It's the answer to a maiden's prayer.

That is, if the maiden uses a PC and Windows XP. Not if you use a Mac. "You need a Pentium," says the salesman for Telstra. Funny how my three Macs manage to get on the internet by dialup, and have no problem other than painfully slow. Why can't Macs talk to a satellite?

Oh well, by the year 2050, I might be able to download Apple updates in less than ten hours. But then Apple might one day put out their updates on CD.

Harold Konz
Inverell, NSW

Letters should be e-mailed to matthew.powell@niche.com.au with a subject header of "Mailbox" or by post to *Australian Macworld* Mailbox, 3/165 Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, Victoria 3182. Letters of fewer than 200 words are given preference. We reserve the right to edit letters and probably will. To be eligible for the Mentor prize, you must include your full name and address, including state or territory.

FileMaker mobile crawls on

■ When is FileMaker going to get fair dinkum with its mobile product? There has been a real and substantial upgrade in FileMaker Pro 7, but the mobile version has not progressed since debut. It has remained a weak imitation of third party programs such as J File Pro and FM synch. Despite the increase in processing power and memory in PDAs, there has been no effort to add real database features such as scripting, or relational function. When I phoned customer support before buying Mobile 7 to see if these features have been added, I was told that PDAs just "don't have the processing power" — absolute rubbish.

PDA-based collection of data will never prosper with FMP until these features are addressed.

Paul McMurrick
Prahan, Victoria

FileMaker replies:

FileMaker Mobile has indeed progressed since its debut. In fact, since the release of FileMaker Mobile 1 in 2001, FileMaker has added support for Pocket PC and made great improvements to the way data is displayed and entered on the mobile devices (such as resizable columns, check boxes, pop-up lists and menus). More recently with version 7, FileMaker Mobile allows multiple users to connect to the same

desktop database and provides the ability to run scripts before and/or after synchronisation, for a better integration to FileMaker Pro 7 solutions.

FileMaker Mobile is in no way an imitation of other PDA based databases. The software is focussed on being an easy to use, "load and go" solution, and addresses a need which other products do not. FileMaker Mobile allows FileMaker Pro users to take their data on the road, view and modify it and synchronise back to their FileMaker database. FileMaker Mobile 7 is a companion for FileMaker Pro 7 and none of the products mentioned by Paul has a desktop counterpart as strong and flexible, yet easy to set up and use, as FileMaker Pro. FileMaker Mobile 7 is the ideal tool for many types of mobile data collection, leaving the complex data processing and reporting to FileMaker Pro 7 on the desktop.

Steve McManus
General Manager Asia Pacific
FileMaker Inc.

Don't join the club

■ Enough of this "switch" already! As a recent convert to the Mac, I have to ask myself, how many more Mac users do I want?

It's not that I am selfish — not unusually so (I hope). I like the hardware and love the operating systems and apps — so why do I not want to share?

Well, I like not having to be worried about virus makers



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targeting my system with worms, trojans and the like. The thing is, how much of this security occurs because the Mac user community presents such a small target? Nothing I have seen reassures me that, were the positions of Apple and Microsoft reversed, the Mac community would not be subject to the same serious threats that face Windows users on a daily basis. I like being able to look forward to interesting developments in hardware and software. If Apple had an interest in preserving its stake on the majority of business desktops, how much innovation would we see?

As long as the Mac community is large enough to remain viable and vibrant, small is good.

Also, show some sympathy for Windows users — remember, but for the grace of a 90 percent difference in market share, that could be us.

Bob Holbert
Gordon ACT

You're probably the type that locks the car doors so no-one else can get in, aren't you? — M.JC.P.

Buy the book

■ I've run out of patience waiting for Apple to bring iPhoto book printing out here. I decided to take action and began ordering iPhoto books from Apple US, using my Australian credit card and sending them to an online mail redirection service's address in the US. It worked flawlessly, and to put it

simply, the iPhoto books are brilliant. I worked out that to have them made and sent from the US to Australia is a lot cheaper than what the Brits pay for their iPhoto books at home.

The finished product of the Apple iPhoto book is what we expect from Apple — perfect in every detail. I tried a printing service that claimed to produced books the same as Apple, here in Australia, but they didn't come close to the quality.

Simply put, I will keep ordering them from Apple US and I don't care if they ever make it here down under. They will probably want to charge more for them here anyway.

Jason Mann
via internet

I haven't tried this myself, because I thought you needed a US credit card. If this does work Apple Australia had better hurry up and get a local service running, or lose the opportunity permanently. — M.JC.P.

Take a chill pill

■ I read with interest the letter by Renny Willins (Mailbox, 10.2004). This is a great example of one of the issues I believe Apple users have: the image of the Apple Zealot.

Fanaticism left me the day I could no longer buy new software for my beloved Commodore Amiga. I now consider myself the computing equivalent of the swinging voter — purchasing machines based on need rather than any sort of brand allegiance. As a result I have a variety of both Wintel

and Apple machines, each purchased to meet the specific requirement of the time.

This means I read a lot of Windows and Mac magazines, web sites etc. and one thing I have noticed is that Mac users spend far too much time trying to tell Wintel users that they are idiots for even thinking about running Windows! What a way to win an argument! My advice: just get on with using your superior machines to produce superior results. The war was lost years ago: use your smarter choice to win a few battles of your own!

Brendan Duck
Canberra, ACT

Of course, Windows users never call Mac users idiots, do they? Check out the Commentary this issue. — M.JC.P.

Voyager II

■ Re: ArtMatic Voyager (Test drive, 08.2004 and Mailbox, 10.2004). Masato Niizeki pointed out that it has now been acquired by DAZ Productions.

This is just to let you know that the DAZ Productions Bryce 5 application has also been bundled with ToonBoom, CorelPHOTO-PAINT 11, CorelDRAW 11, CorelTRACE 11, and others, in a Creative Essentials pack from Allume (formerly Aladdin Systems).

It's available from good resellers and distributed by PICA for \$250.

Paul Hellard
Business Development Manager
PICA Software

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■ LEGAL WRANGLING 1



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The plaintiff

Apple in court over monitors

Last month manufacturing giant Honeywell announced that it has filed suit in federal court against Apple Computer and more than thirty other companies, alleging infringement over a 1994 patent that describes technology used to improve the quality of images shown on a Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) panel. Honeywell filed its suit on October 6, 2004 in US District Court for the district of Delaware.

In the documents, Honeywell alleges that Apple and the other defendants are violating US Patent 5,280,371. Filed in July of 1992 and granted in January, 1994, the patent describes a "directional diffuser for a liquid crystal display."

Many of the companies named in the suit are various business units of the same major corporations. Other defendants named include Argus aka Hartford Computer Group, Audiovox, Casio, Concord Cameras, Dell, Eastman Kodak, Fuji, Fujitsu, Kyocera, Matsushita, Navman, Nikon, Nokia, Olympus, Pentax, Sanyo, Sony, Sony Ericsson and Toshiba.

In its 28-page complaint, Honeywell describes its technology as enabling "a display to produce a brighter image (making the screen easier to see) without requiring additional power while helping to reduce the appearance of an undesirable interference pattern called



the 'Moire effect' on the screen." Honeywell originally developed the technology for the aerospace industry, for use with LCD-based displays in airplane cockpits.

"Apple has been and is engaged in the manufacture, importation, offer for sale, and/or sale of products that include a liquid crystal display (LCD) in the United States with the knowledge and intention that such LCD screen-containing products would be sold throughout the United States, including this judicial district," reads Honeywell's complain. "Such products include at least one of the following: laptop computers, cellular phones, PDAs, digital still cameras, video cameras, portable DVD players and portable televisions, and/or portable game systems." Honeywell's complaint against Apple is worded identically to the complaints listed for every other company named in the suit.

The complaint indicates that "at least some of the LCD screen-containing products manufactured, imported, offered for sale, and/or sold by Apple" and the other defendants named in the suit infringe its patent. The company is asking the court for an injunction to prevent the defendants from continuing to infringe its patent, and for "damages adequate to compensate them for Defendants' infringement, in an amount to be proven at trial, together with interest and costs as fixed by the Court."

A Honeywell spokesman was unable to provide more detail on the specific Apple products the company believes infringe upon its patents.

Apple routinely refuses to comment on pending litigation.

● Peter Cohen

■ APPLE NEWS



Hot Links

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iPod's commanding market share

836,000 Macs and 2 million iPods

Apple not only reached a major milestone with its highest fourth quarter earnings in nine years, according to CEO Steve Jobs, but it also shattered its previous record with more than 2 million iPods shipped during the fourth quarter of its 2004 fiscal year -- an incredible 500 percent increase over the fourth quarter of 2003 and 134 percent more than the previous quarter.

That number not only helped the company reach a commanding 92.1 percent share of the market for hard drive-based MP3 players, according to a recent report released by The NPD Group, but it also brought in \$US537 million in revenue -- more than any other product segment during the quarter and almost 23 percent of the \$US2.35 billion revenue Apple reported. iPod revenue was up 344 percent and 116 percent year-over-year and sequentially, respectively.

"We are thrilled to report our highest fourth quarter revenue in nine years," said Jobs in a statement. "We shipped over two million iPods, our Retail store revenue grew 95 percent year-over-year, and the new iMac G5 has received phenomenal reviews and is off to a great start."

By the numbers. On the CPU front, Apple sold 836,000 computers, a six percent increase over the year-ago quarter but down five percent from the third quarter of 2004. Revenue for the entire category was \$US1.231 billion, up three percent year-over-year but down three percent sequentially. The company blamed the sluggish numbers on limited G5 processor availability, which delayed the introduction of the G5 iMac and affected the Power Mac G5 pipeline. iBooks led the way in this category with 238,000 units sold, which translated to \$US256 million in revenue, numbers that were up 74 and 66 percent year-over-year, respectively, but down one to two percent from Q304.

iMac and eMac shipments, which Apple rolls together in one category, came in second with 229,000 units sold and \$US216 million in revenue. That was a 23 percent drop in revenue from Q403 but eight percent down from Q304, with the corresponding unit numbers down nine and six percent, respec-

tively. PowerBooks were the third-best selling computers with 213,000 units moved and \$US419 million in sales, making the portables the largest revenue earner among Apple's CPUs. The company sold 21 percent more of the laptops over Q403, with revenue up 20 percent, but looking at the numbers sequentially shows units sold and revenue down three and four percent, respectively.

Power Mac, which includes the Xserve product line, sold 156,000 units for \$US340 million in revenue during Q404 -- those numbers are down 29 and 16 percent year-over-year but down ten percent and up two percent compared to last quarter. Given the higher sticker prices on Power Mac G5 and Xserve computers, this category was the second-highest revenue earner among Apple's CPUs.

In Apple's other sales categories, Other Music Products, which includes the iTunes Music Store and iPod-related accessories, came in at \$US98 million, Peripherals & Other Hardware was \$US271 million and Software & Other was \$US213 million. That first category jumped 600 percent year-over-year and 34 percent sequentially while the others saw more modest growth of 24 to 34 percent when compared to Q403 and Q304 -- except Software & Other, which flat-lined with a one percent improvement since last quarter.

Place to place. The Americas tend to be Apple's strongest geographical area, and the fourth quarter was no exception to that rule. The company sold 471,000 CPUs in the Americas for

\$US1.196 billion in revenue, a slight decrease from the 472,000 sold last quarter -- although those CPUs brought in \$US1.018 billion in sales -- but a large jump from the 453,000 units sold and \$US928 million in revenue generated a year ago.

In Europe, Apple sold 155,000 units for \$US423 million, a two and 19 percent drop year-over-year and sequentially in terms of sheer numbers but up 31 and four percent when looking at revenue. Apple's worldwide retail stores were the next largest segment in this category, with 98,000 Macs pushed out the doors for \$US376 million in sales. Revenue in the Apple Stores jumped 95 and 39 percent year-over-year and sequentially while units sold was up 66 and 34 percent.

Japan and other segments, which include Asia Pacific and Apple's FileMaker subsidiary, tied with 56,000 units sold. Revenue in the former was \$US175 million and in the latter it came in at \$US180 million. Japan is down 26 and 32 percent year-over-year and sequentially in terms of units sold but up two percent in both comparisons when you look at revenue. Year-over-year, the other category saw an 80 percent jump in revenue and a 37 percent hop in units sold, but sequentially, revenue was up 23 percent and unit sales were down three percent. ☐



■ MOBILITY



Hot Links

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Get all the skinny

PalmOne introduces new devices

At the start of October, PalmOne announced an upgrade to its Tungsten line of professional-level handhelds in the form of the T5. Just as this issue hits the stands, it is poised to announce an addition to its range of Treo smartphones as well.

The Treo 650 is an update to last year's Treo 600 (the last Treo model to bear the Handspring logo). Additions to the 650 include a larger, brighter screen at 320 by 320 pixels and a significantly better camera – capable of 1.3-megapixel stills as opposed to the Treo 600's 640 × 480 VGA images. The phone will also be able to record video clips.

It also includes an enhanced keyboard, slightly curved as opposed to the Treo 600's rigid rectangular shape. PalmOne said that the design would make it easier to type with. Other design tweaks include the welcome addition of a removable battery – the Treo 600's battery was non-removable and required recharging by sitting in an iPod-style cradle. A removable battery means that users can carry spares with them on the road for extended life (are you listening Steve?).

The Treo 650 is an important product for PalmOne, which entered the smartphone market as instant leader with its acquisition of Handspring but will soon face intense competition from makers such as Blackberry and Nokia. The Treo 650 is expected to be available in Australia at the beginning of next year.

Available now though is the Tungsten T5, the latest addition to the top end of the PalmOne range. The T5 features a bright 320 × 480 colour screen and Bluetooth as standard. It also employs flash memory that will retain data in case the battery runs out before you can get to a charger.

The T5 runs Palm OS 5.4 (PalmSource, the company that develops Palm OS, is separate to PalmOne, the manufacturer of the Tungsten) and uses a 416MHz Intel Xscale processor for significantly higher performance than the T3, its predecessor. In case you were wondering, no there was no T4. A PalmOne spokesperson said that the number four is considered unlucky in some cultures and therefore the designation was skipped.

An interesting byproduct of the T5's use of flash memory is that 215MB out of the unit's total 256MB can be used just like a flash drive when mounted on a Mac or PC. This essentially means that the T5 has two file systems operating concurrently: one for managing files saved from the T5's own applications and one for managing files saved from a Mac or PC. Given that some, though not all, of these files could potentially be shared between Mac and Palm applications, AMW is looking forward to getting our hands on a review unit to see how this works in practice.

An expansion slot on the T5 supports SD, SDIO and MultiMedia Card formats and can be used to expand the RAM of the device or add applications. The RRP of the Tungsten T5 is \$749. ● Matthew JC. Powell



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■ COMP WINNER

Story board

Way way back in the August issue *AMW* and NewTek offered a fantastic prize of a copy of LightWave 3D valued at \$2800. All you had to do to win it was provide us with a sketch of an animation sequence that you would like to create using this amazing software. You also had to have the good fortune not to have your competition entry misplaced when the editor moved offices – that's why we didn't announce the winner last issue as promised. Once all the boxes were unpacked and the competition entries located we were able to judge the competition fairly. Our apologies for making you wait.

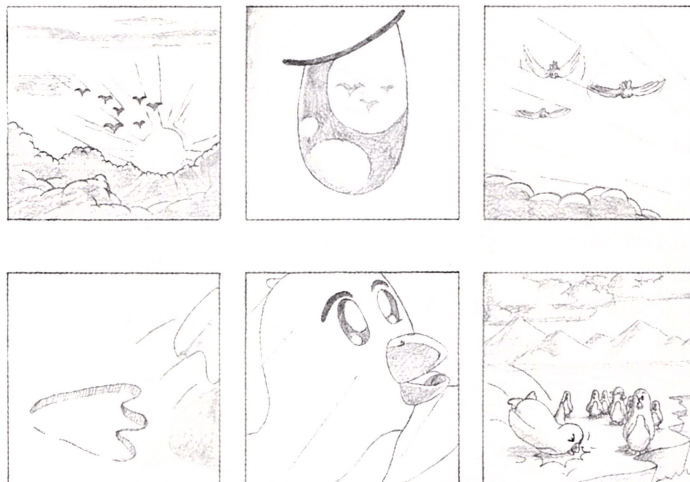
Without further ado, the prize goes to James Wilson of Hawthorn Victoria for

his sequence entitled "Flight", in which a young penguin discovers that not all dreams are realistic. It's funny, it's cute, it's touching – and most importantly it tells its story very efficiently.

We received a number of really clever entries for this competition, and it's worth mentioning in particular one called "Misplaced" by Steve Bolton, in which a ham disappears from a microwave only to reappear in some mysterious place – the same place where lost socks, keys and mobile phones go. It was a very close second.

Congratulations to James, your prize is on its way. Perhaps when you've got it you'll animate your story and send us a copy?

● Matthew J.C. Powell



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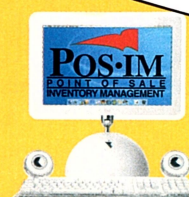
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■ VIDEO

Meeting HD

Imagine being able to pick out individual fans in the crowd during a wide-screen cricket broadcast, or to see the intricate crosshatching of Martin Sheen's tie as he addresses the nation during an episode of *The West Wing*. High Definition (HD) video promises such things – a wider field of view and much more image detail. Whether you're interested in watching, creating, or just learning more about HD, now is a good time to start paying attention – prices for the equipment necessary to watch and make HD content are falling. Here, we'll look at some of the technology behind HD; in a future issue, we'll explore HD creation on the Mac.

Formats face off. NTSC (National Television System Committee) video as used in the US and Japan has 720 horizontal pixels and 486 vertical pixels (480 vertical pixels for compressed formats such as DV and MPEG-2) and has a frame rate of 30 frames per second. PAL (Phase Alternating Line) video as used here and in the UK has 720 horizontal pixels and 576 vertical pixels at a frame rate of 25 frames per second. Interestingly, if you do the maths, you'll discover that that means both standards produce the same number of pixels per second.

Both standards are interlaced – each video frame is made up of two distinct video fields. The first field contains the odd lines of an image; the second, the even lines. The aspect ratio of Standard Definition (SD) TVs is 4:3.

At the core of HD video is increased resolution. HD pushes the pixel count way up, most commonly to 1280 by 720 pixels or 1920 by 1080 pixels. These HD types are usually referred to by vertical pixel count and whether frames are progressive or interlaced – for example, 720P format or 1080i format. There are roughly 350,000 pixels available in a frame of SD video; HD displays more than 2 million – this is why the sharpness of HD video is startling. HD can have a variety of frame rates, but HD broadcasting is usually 1080i at 30 fps or 720P at 60 fps. HD is also a wide-screen format, with a native aspect ratio of 16:9. Watching HD feels like a movie-theatre experience. HD

What it means: HD

The world of modern video is filled with confusing terms and unwieldy acronyms. Our glossary will help you sort it all out.

Aspect ratio: The proportions (width:height) of the viewing area on a monitor or a television screen. HD has a wide-screen, 16:9 ratio. SD has a narrower ratio — 4:3.

ATSC: A digital-broadcasting standard developed by the Advanced Television System Committee (also refers to DTV and HDTV standards).

Digital TV (DTV): A television signal transmitted as digital information. HD video is digital, but not all digital broadcasts are HD.

Dolby Digital: Six-channel digital-audio standard, also called AC-3 or Digital 5.1.

Enhanced Definition TV (EDTV): A progressive SD television that accepts the progressive output of some DVD players. Usually, these TVs also have a de-interlacer built-in. They are not HDTVs.

HDMI: High Definition Multimedia Interface — a digital connector.

HDTV-ready: A TV that can display HD video if a separate HD decoder box is attached.

MPEG-2: Moving Picture Experts Group 2. A video-compression format used to condense HD and SD video, for smaller data rates in DVDs and broadcasting.

Terrestrial broadcast: Traditional over-the-air broadcast.

signals can also broadcast using Dolby 5.1-channel surround sound, the audio format used in most commercial DVDs.

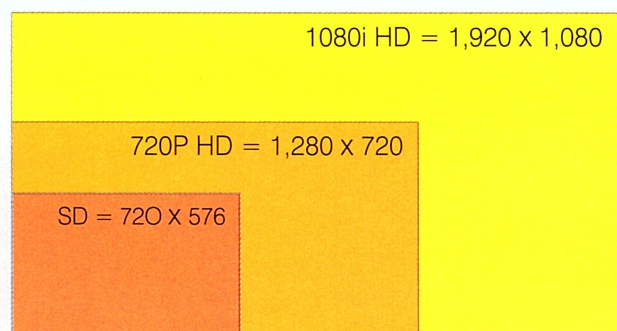
Keeping watch. HD content currently makes up a very small percentage of television broadcasts. But with American shows such as *Alias*, *Law & Order*, *Six Feet Under*, and an increasing number of sports broadcasts, HDTVs are becoming more than

expensive eye candy. You can receive HD signals, encoded as MPEG-2 streams, via satellite, digital cable, or ATSC digital broadcasts (see “What it means: HD” for a glossary of HD-related terms).

There are no HD DVDs yet, but the DVD Forum, which brought you today's DVD, has adopted an HD DVD standard, which can use H.264/AVC (Advanced Video Coding), Windows Media Video 9's VC-9 technology, and MPEG 2.

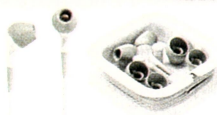
● Anton Linecker

Getting the big(ger) picture



Comparing formats.

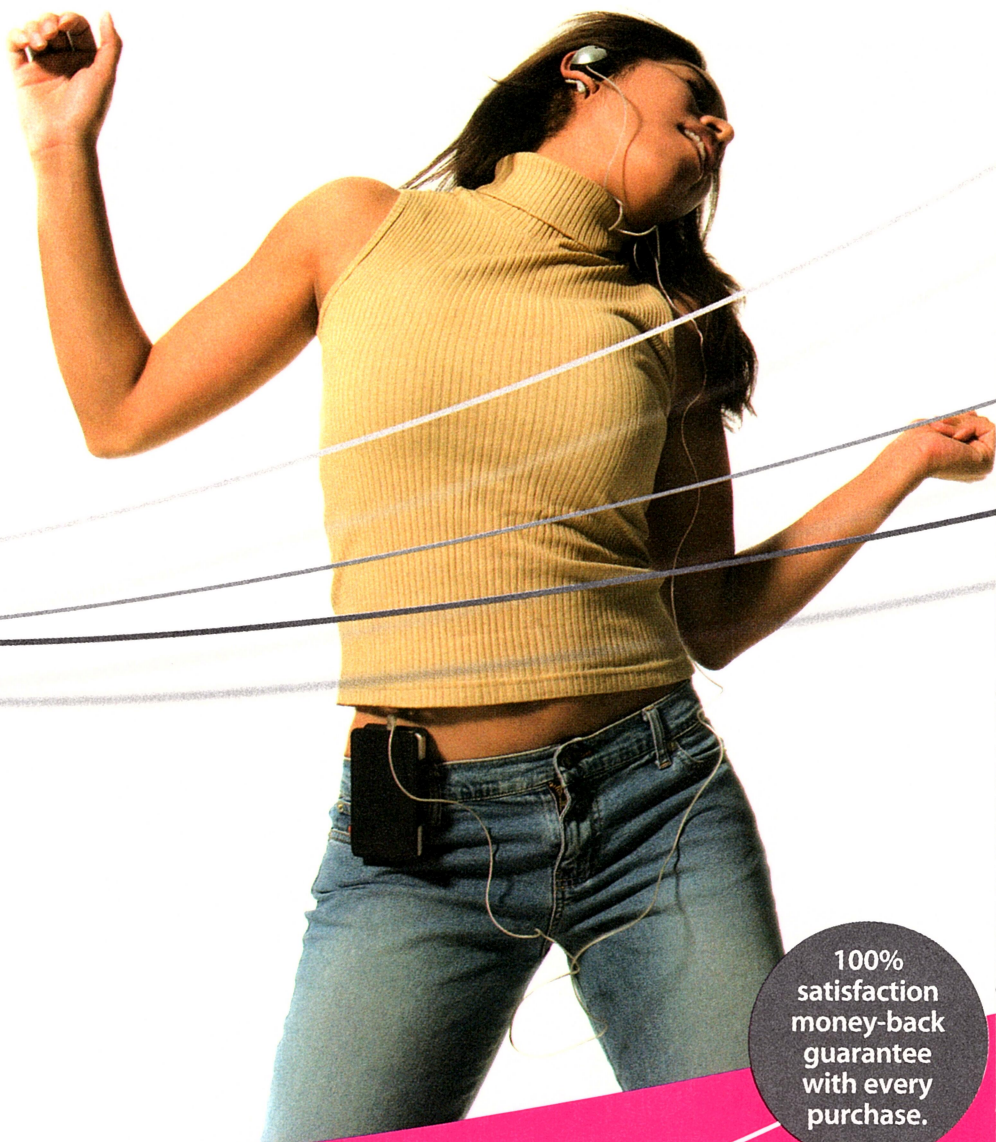
High Definition (HD) video easily dwarfs traditional Standard Definition (SD) video. This chart compares relative visible frame sizes and aspect ratios (measured in pixels) between SD and common HD broadcast formats.



www.playlist.com.au

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■ BRIEFS



Hot Links

www.cherryos.com

Put a Porsche engine into a Daewoo

www.microsoft.com/mac

Keep Office 2004 up to date

www.m-audio.com

Viva la revolucion

www.filemaker.com.au/promos/xmas

Buy one, give one free

www.playlist.com.au

Buy ipod gear online

Cherry OS — miracle or hoax?

In mid-October Hawaii-based developer MXS announced that it had succeeded in doing what many have suggested Apple should do for a long time: getting Mac OS to run on Intel hardware.

The means of doing so is a virtual machine like Microsoft's Virtual PC, except in reverse. Where VPC lets you run Windows in a virtual environment on Mac hardware, MXS promised that its product, CherryOS, would let you run Mac OS X 10.3 on less expensive Intel hardware. The company's press release promised much — full network capabilities and complete access to the host computer's hardware resources, at approximately 80 percent of the speed of the host processor. Virtual PC took several generations before it achieved that kind of functionality.

Developer Arben Kryeziu is quoted as saying "now about 600 million PC users can have the Mac advantage ... one computer to run all software, and if PC users would use Mac software to get e-mail perhaps they would avoid Trojans, viruses and spyware".

It all sounds too good to be true (or too bad, considering what such a product might do to Apple's hardware sales figures), and perhaps it is. At press time, the company's web site (see "Hot links") had not a download but a promise of "screenshots and movies and a complete feature list", plus a strange little "song" about the product. We'll keep you posted.

● Matthew JC. Powell

Gaming revolution

One enduring Mac gamer's lament: Macs don't support 3D positional audio, as most PCs do. Those days are over, thanks to M-Audio's Revolution 5.1, a PCI card that supports OpenAL, an open standard for 3D audio that's seeing increasing support in Mac games. In fact, the \$199 card is bundled with a Mac game — a version of Aspyr Media's Wakeboarding Unleashed Featuring Shaun Murray that has been "remixed" for maximum surround-sound potential. The card's mini-jack outputs connect to just about any 5.1 channel computer-speaker systems out there, and the coaxial digital output can hook up to your home entertainment system — with much less stress on the CPU than the G5's digital output. The Revolution 5.1, like other M-Audio products, is available from Electric Factory on 03 9480 9588.

Microsoft updates Office 2004

Microsoft's Mac Business Unit has announced the availability of Office 2004 for Mac Service Pack 1, an update for the latest Macintosh release of the company's popular productivity

application software suite. The service pack "addresses potential security issues and bugs that [user] feedback played an important role in identifying," according to Microsoft. What's more, the new version features support for Microsoft Error Reporting Protocol (MERP), which allows customers to send bug reports to Microsoft anonymously.

Office 2004 for Mac Service Pack 1 is expected to be available through Microsoft AutoUpdate (select Check for Updates from the Help menu in Office 2004 applications), and will also be available for download from Mactopia (see "Hot links"). ● Peter Cohen

FileMaker gets the Christmas spirit

If you purchase a copy of FileMaker Pro 7 before the 15th of December, you'll have the opportunity to give a copy to a friend for free. FileMaker's offer to play Santa follows a similar promotion last year involving FileMaker Pro 6. All you have to do is purchase a copy of FMP7 (purchases made after the 11th of October are valid) and go to the web site (see "Hot links") to nominate a friend or colleague you'd like to receive a copy of their very own. FileMaker will send a gift-wrapped copy of the program to any one within Australia in time for Christmas. Sure beats socks. ● Matthew JC. Powell

MacSense picks up Mariner

Mariner Software, maker of quality inexpensive productivity packages like Mariner Calc and Mariner Write, now has an Australian distributor. Previously the company's products have only been available to Australians by downloading them off the company's web site (see "Hot links") but those who prefer to have a CD to take home can now contact MacSense on 02 9319 2288.

● Matthew JC. Powell

Get your iPod stuff online

Victorian-based Mac reseller Desktop Power has announced it's branching into the iPod business, launching a dedicated web site for iPod accessories. Playlist (see "Hot links") is described as an "online audio superstore", offering iPods and a wide range of accessories. The site will also feature reviews of products written by Playlist staff. An interesting innovation for an online store is Playlist's 30-day money-back guarantee if customers aren't satisfied with products they've purchased. ●

Matthew JC. Powell

Quark prices reduced — briefly

Modulo Systems, the local distributor of Quark products, issued a release shortly before this issue went to press announcing that it was slashing prices on Quark XPress 6 upgrades and academic packages — in some cases by 50 percent or more. Unfortunately the academic offer expires on the 29th of October, shortly after this issue hits the stands, and offers on Quark XPress Passport edition will already have expired by the time you read this. However, there may still be some bargains to be had (upgrades from Quark XPress 3.x to 6.x reduced from \$1260 to \$530, for instance) so if you've been putting off upgrading maybe now's the time to call Modulo on 02 9387 5300. Just be quick.

● Matthew JC. Powell



■ LEGAL WRANGLES 2

**Hot Links**www.apple.comwww.real.com

The combatants

www.freedomofmusicchoice.org

Real states its case

Apple and RealNetworks face off over the iPod

When RealNetworks announced, in July, that the next version of its RealPlayer software would allow users to play music purchased from the company's PC-only online music store — which employs its own digital rights management (DRM) system — on an iPod, Apple was less than thrilled. Apple's protected AAC format, using Apple's FairPlay DRM, is the only rights-managed format authorised to play on the iPod. So Real's news prompted Apple to release a statement saying that the iPod maker was "stunned that RealNetworks has adopted the tactics and ethics of a hacker to break into the iPod," and that it was considering legal action.

Without an immediate legal challenge from Apple, Real went ahead and released RealPlayer 10.5, which incorporates the Harmony technology that allows playback of RealPlayer Music Store files on the iPod. To sweeten the deal, in August Real began selling songs for 49 US cents each and, for a limited time, many albums for \$US4.99 each — half as much as the iTunes Music Store charges. Both of these features undoubtedly helped the company to hit the million-songs-sold milestone by the end of August (Apple passed the 100-million mark at around the same time). The real question, however, is what will all of this mean to the consumer?

The good, the bad, and the iPod. Real is trying to paint its fight as one that will ultimately benefit users. Consumers, not Apple, Real says, should be the ones choosing what music goes on people's iPods. To further its cause, Real launched the Freedom of Music Choice web site (see "Hot links"), which included a petition that users could add comments to. The petition was quickly removed — apparently due to an overwhelming number of posts by Apple supporters — and replaced by a link to a stock petition that allows people only to "sign" with their e-mail addresses.

With so much money at stake, analysts are quick to point out that Real isn't the white knight it wants consumers to believe it is. "Both Real and Apple are fighting to cloak themselves in the language of protecting consumers. In reality, both of them are actively working hard to restrict consumer choices," says Fred von Lohmann, an attorney with the Electronic Frontier Foundation industry group.



Von Lohmann says that the bickering is about DRM and that each of these companies is eager to keep consumers locked into the digital-rights scheme it prefers. With Apple commanding an early lead with the iTunes Music Store, Real is desperately trying to catch up.

"It has nothing to do with consumer freedom," von Lohmann says. "If these companies cared about that, they would be recommending that consumers burn all the music they buy to CD and then re-rip those tracks into unrestricted formats like MP3, which works on all the portable digital-music players on the market."

"Apple's got a good thing going and they don't want to change it," says Forrester Research analyst Josh Bernoff.

Bernoff adds that selling music at half the price is a way to get attention, but it's not a long-term strategy. The main effect of RealNetworks' efforts is that people are realising that the music they bought on iTunes will have to stay in an Apple system and can't be moved onto any other device, he says. "That's a little bit of a concern for people who spend hundreds of dollars only to get locked into Apple technology."

Still, IDC analyst Roger Kay says that consumers clearly benefit, pricewise, when a platform is open and companies compete to sell compatible material. He also says that Apple may have a motive other than money to keep its platform closed: "When Apple has total control of the experience, [it] can deliver a more uniform experience, which you don't usually get with an open platform."

I fought the law. So what does the future hold? Attorney von Lohmann and analyst Bernoff say that Apple will likely disable Real's workarounds in the next iPod update. Then, if Real continues to make its content compatible, Apple may consider a lawsuit. But don't expect a slam-dunk win for Apple in court.

Although Apple has refused to license its FairPlay technology, Real is not actually breaking the encryption of iTunes files – which would be illegal under the Digital Millennium

Copyright Act. Rather, it's creating its own encrypted file. But how does Real create a file that the iPod will play? The answer is unclear.

"What we did was not reverse-engineering," said Sean Ryan, RealNetworks' vice president of Music Services, at the Jupiter Plug.IN Conference this year. "We looked at publicly available data moving between the user and the iPod."

Bernoff says that Real's technique is relatively well protected by law, adding, "It's the same technique that Compaq used to make the first IBM-compatible computer."

If Apple does pursue a legal challenge, it might have other options, according to Scott Culpepper, a partner at Atlanta-based law firm Thomas, Kayden, Horstemeyer & Risley who specialises in copyright, patent, and DMCA law. "I could see an argument that Apple could make that [it has] copyrights in the DRM itself," says Culpepper. "And what RealNetworks' software is basically doing is making a copy of Apple's DRM software code."

The other potential avenue Culpepper sees for Apple is a contract claim that RealNetworks violated Apple's software license. "When you download iTunes from Apple's site, you're required to execute a click license; as part of that license, you agree that you won't reverse-engineer the software," says Culpepper. "Again, we don't know what Real did, but it seems like they would have to reverse-engineer something, so Apple may have some contract cause of action."

For their part, Bernoff says that record companies – eager to have as many outlets as possible for their clients – are behind Real's efforts. "They would like to have more competition," he adds. Consumers, however, are mixed on the whole issue. Die-hard iPod fans believe that only Apple can consistently deliver quality products and content, and that other companies shouldn't be allowed to encroach on its technology.

Others see Real as riding on Apple's coattails without offering any real benefit to consumers. Still others believe that Apple shouldn't have a monopoly on content for the iPod. ● *Adelia Cellini (Jim Dalrymple contributed to this report.)*

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■ TWENTY YEARS OF THE MAC



Hot Links

www.filemaker.com

Two decades and still going strong



FileMaker turns 20

It's an Apple-owned product that revolutionised computing. It helped ordinary people perform complicated tasks usually reserved for the most sophisticated users. And it's celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. The Mac? Not this time – FileMaker is also celebrating the big “two-oh” this year.

When a group of former Wang Laboratories employees – Alan Albert, Dan Chadwick, Spec Bowers, and Jega Arulpragasam – started developing database software two decades ago, creating a program that would still be around 20 years later was the furthest thing from their minds. “The database we created had to be usable by regular people, not database experts,” says Albert.

Albert and his colleagues – having founded Nashoba Systems – wanted to take an approach that was different from that of the hard-to-use database programs common at the time. Their database would allow for changeable field names, sizes, types, and display attributes; show multiple graphical layouts for displaying a single set of data; and avoid artificial limits.

Although FileMaker wasn't originally developed for the Mac, its creators immediately saw the potential in Apple's new computer. “We thought it was the perfect platform,” Chadwick says.

FileMaker's capabilities have expanded dramatically since its debut. But its current makers have stuck to the principle that the database should be simple enough for anyone to use. “Our vision today is very similar to the vision of 20 years ago,” says FileMaker's president, Dominic Goupil.

FileMaker co-creator Albert agrees: “Looking at the latest version of FileMaker,” Albert says, “you see our original design goals in full force.”

● Philip Michaels



Hot Links

www.billatkinson.com

Original Mac team member

Photo meister

Bill Atkinson was one of Apple's original software superstars – responsible for MacPaint, HyperCard, and much of QuickDraw and the Mac's user interface. His name was even engraved inside every first-generation Mac. But these days, he's more interested in rocks than in code. An avid photographer, Atkinson was visiting Arizona several years ago when the patterns and colours in local rock shops caught his eye. He started bringing cut and polished Ocean Jasper, dendritic opalite, Marra Mamba tigereye, and other exotic stones back to his Los Gatos, California, studio. There, he shot them in extreme close-up using Better Light's 48-megapixel, \$US13,995 Super6K-2 digital scanning back.

The results can be seen in Atkinson's new book, *Within the Stone* (BrownTrout Publishers, 2004). His goal: To help people see these stones not as raw material for jewellery, but as works of art themselves. After landing a job at Apple in 1978, Atkinson used photography as a way to balance out the pressures of his computer work. “It didn't require the intense concentration that programming did,” he says.

Atkinson has long since donated his collection of early Macs, along with his original source binders for QuickDraw and MacPaint, to the Computer History Museum in Silicon Valley – but he still loves the machine he helped invent. “Back then, I thought the 128K Mac was pretty cool,” recalls Atkinson. “But my main system now has 64,000 times the RAM and 20,000 times the processing power.” Even so, he's maxing out his dual-processor Power Mac G5 by running 300MB images through Adobe Photoshop and outputting them to an Epson Stylus Pro 9600 wide-format printer. “For twelve years at Apple, I made tools to empower creative people. Now, I'm the one who's being creative.” ● Dan Miller



Off the net

Latest shareware and free downloads



■ WhatsOn 0.11 Freeware X

Get your city or regional area's Australian TV guide in a Konfabulator desktop widget.

■ MMInputFamily 0.68 Freeware X (10.2 or later)

Watch digital TV on your Mac. What better excuse to upgrade to a 20" G5 iMac! These Australian-developed drivers allow you to plug a bog-standard digital TV PCI card or USB 2.0 box into your Mac. You'll need to buy a PCI card or USB box based on the Technotrend DVB-T chipset, but they're easily found for less than \$200.

■ iTele 0.5.3 Freeware X (10.2 or later)

Watch, record and time-shift Australian digital TV broadcasts on a Mac

■ Mpegitor 0.1.2 Freeware X (10.2 or later)

Convert the MPEG-2 transport stream recordings from iTele into an MPEG-2 program stream that you can burn onto a DVD and watch on a standard DVD player.

■ Sliply 1.3 Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Create custom OS X 10.3 installation DVDs that include other software packages and all current software-updates preinstalled.

■ WhereIs Driving Directions 1.1 Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Get driving directions from the address in your me card in Address Book to an address in any of your contacts. There's also a version available for Entourage.

■ WhereIs (for Address Book) 1.3.1 Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Fetch an Australian street-map from the WhereIs site for any address in your Address Book contacts. Also available for Entourage.

■ Calq 1.1 Freeware X (10.2 or later)

Calculator that works like Alt+Tab application switching. Hit the keyboard shortcut, and the calculator formula bar pops into the foreground as a semi-transparent window.

■ Mac3DWatch 1.2.1 \$US12 Shareware X (10.3 or later)

Incredible 3D screensaver of a metallic spinning clock, with constantly updated news from hundreds of RSS news feeds scrolling the screen. Needs a powerful video card.

■ Skype 0.10.0.1 Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Call other Skype users worldwide free of charge, or any regular phone at a lower cost than making a normal long distance call. But beware — Skype does not use the standard SIP protocol unlike other VoIP programs like X-Ten Lite, so you can't change VoIP provider.

■ Safari Enhancer 2.5.1 Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Enable Safari's hidden debug menu, turn off Safari's cache entirely, change the search engine used in the search bar (to

Google Australia, for instance), configure how much history Safari saves, and more.

■ ByteController 0.9 Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Menu-bar controller for iTunes with skins that cut a tab into your menu bar. Also allows system-wide keyboard control, including the ability to skip back and forward in songs/voice recordings.

■ CleanArchiver 2.2.2 Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Rid your system of the slow and proprietary Stuffit archive utility forever: this alternative uses OS X's inbuilt Unix tools to create a range of industry-standard formats including gzip, bzip2, zip and Mac OS X disk image (dmg).

■ Fullscreen Movie Player 2.2 Freeware X, QuickTime

Get full-screen playback in QuickTime without paying for the Pro version and many features you might not need.

■ fiwt 0.3 Freeware X, Safari (10.2 or later)

Find-as-you-type software for Safari. Type a word, and it will immediately be highlighted on the page you're on.

■ Countdown 1.4 Freeware X

A countdown timer in your menu bar, with sound and visual alert. Never overcook an egg again. ● Dan Warne



Hot Links

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The view from the other side of the counter.

By Fleur Doidge.

More Apples a day may keep losses away

APPLE always has something — usually several somethings — that can't be manufactured, stocked or shipped in sufficient quantity to keep customers happy. Time and again, I talk to resellers only to hear them repeat the same litany: "Can't get enough iPods". If it's not iPods they can't get, it's iMacs, or eMacs, or G5s, or something else.

Apple fans live in a grey no-Macs-land of thwarted desire.

The vendor itself is rarely caught on the back foot. Apple's shares surged 10 percent to \$US32.59 on the news of its third quarter financial results in the US. For the three months ended 26 June, Apple earned \$US61 million or 16 US cents a share. That's more than triple the \$US19 million it reported for the same period in 2003.

It's always easy for marketroids to put a spin on the fact of a supply problem. Generally, they flick their newly-varnished nails in the air, flip their blonde tresses and exclaim: "Ooooooh, demand has been staggering. We just can't supply in large enough quantities".

Wow. The product must be really something, right? Better get on the waiting list. It'll be worth waiting for.

The rarer an item, the more desired. Apple is like the prettiest cheerleader on a not-so-level playing field. She's out there, and she's got the goods stacked out front, but just you try to cop a feel. Her untouchability conjures up an illusion — a glamour — of exclusivity. Not only is the product expensive and high quality, but it's really hard to get.

You can't blame Apple for trying to put a positive spin on it. Nor can you blame some resellers for doing the same, or at the very least playing along.

But what's going on? Common sense says supply "challenges" are in actual fact something that needs to be fixed. Making computers is not like being a farmer. You don't actually have to grow the chips. The storms of the business world aren't quite as unpredictable as the ones that take out a farmer's corn crop. Apple's supply problems tend to suggest a lack of foresight or planning or both.

Buzz or no buzz, if a product isn't available then customers might just buy a competitor's product instead. It also tends to suggest — rightly or wrongly — that there will also be problems with post-sales support, including even technical support.

It's true other vendors also have regular supply problems. Treo 600 smartphone sales were hamstrung by a display parts shortage in April due to unpredictable LCD component availability. AMD, Intel,



Hot Links

www.apple.com/pr/library/2004/jul/14results.html
Apple's third-quarter financial results

Gateway, Dell and HP have all had to disappoint customers. Analysts say it's almost impossible for any vendor with multinational distribution and a captive distribution method to avoid shortages and inequitable supply. That's particularly the case when a vendor is trying to mete out inventory to direct, internal sales and an indirect reseller channel (as is the case with Apple).

But if that's the case, why can't Apple predict likely shortages sooner? Does the company prefer to simply live in hope, with the first two fingers on each hand crossed behind its back?

No one is saying that there should never be shortages or supply problems. Yet a casual observer might be forgiven for thinking that

the situation could be vastly improved. Surely, Apple should employ someone with the ingenuity to invent a better system that would produce fairer, more predictable results without hurting profits?

Perhaps there are better ways to track products from field to desk, as it were, than are yet being harnessed. Surely, something could be built into Apple's processes to create room for manoeuvre when supply and demand don't match.

Apple, unfortunately, can play its cards close to its chest when it comes to the news media. I received an invitation recently from Apple Australia to a media briefing promoting Apple products as great stocking-stuffers for Christmas, including a G5 iMac, a 30-inch cinema display, AirPort Express, iPod and iPod mini.

I sent back this reply: "Hi, [name deleted to protect the guilty]: Thanks for this. But how might resellers be certain they will be able to get sufficient stock in time for Christmas? This is a real issue for Apple right now. Time for some comment?" Apple's response to my query has remained conspicuous by its absence.

The holiday season can put pressure on already stretched supplies. Apple has already suffered G5 processor shortages this year — like it did with the G4. Those 30-inch Apple cinema displays have also already been delayed.

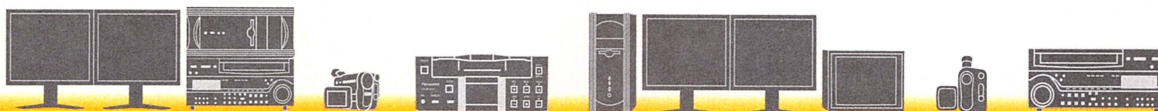
To be fair, once I did get an actual Apple executive on the phone. However, even then Apple wasn't keen to talk figures or give any concrete indication of how Apple might fix its chronic supply problems.

Apple's always been a company with great ideas, but it tends to rest on its laurels. Improve supply, and next quarter's profits could be even more spectacular. ☞



Fleur Doidge is a longtime observer of the Mac reseller channel in Australia.

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By Jonathan Seff.



Up close with the iMac



Hot Links

www.apple.com.au/imac
From the creators of iPod



IF you were to rank all the reasons for Apple's mid-nineties revival, you'd have to put the success of the original iMac (along with the return of a guy named Steve) right at the top of the list. The brightly coloured plastic all-in-one not only inspired all sorts of copycat designs – computer-related (mice, printers, and hubs) and otherwise (the George Foreman grill) – but also made computing fun again. The flat-panel iMac introduced two years ago had the same effect – here was a computer you wouldn't mind displaying out in the open, instead of tucking your system away behind closed doors.

In many ways, the iMac G5 represents an even more radical design leap than the two models that came before it. Apple's web site touts the new iMac as being "from the creators of iPod." That's more than a not-so-subtle reminder to buyers that the iMac

shares a bank account with a certain sleek, white consumer product that accounts for most of Apple's profits these days. It also speaks to some striking similarities in look and style.

"We're making a connection to the iPod at a marketing level, but the connection existed long before we dreamed of the marketing," says Greg "Joz" Joswiak, Apple's vice president of hardware product marketing. "They're both very simple products that people couldn't figure out how to do simply."

"And obviously," he adds, "we have one design team, so there's no doubt that you see similarities." In other words, it fits neatly into Apple's recent design aesthetic.

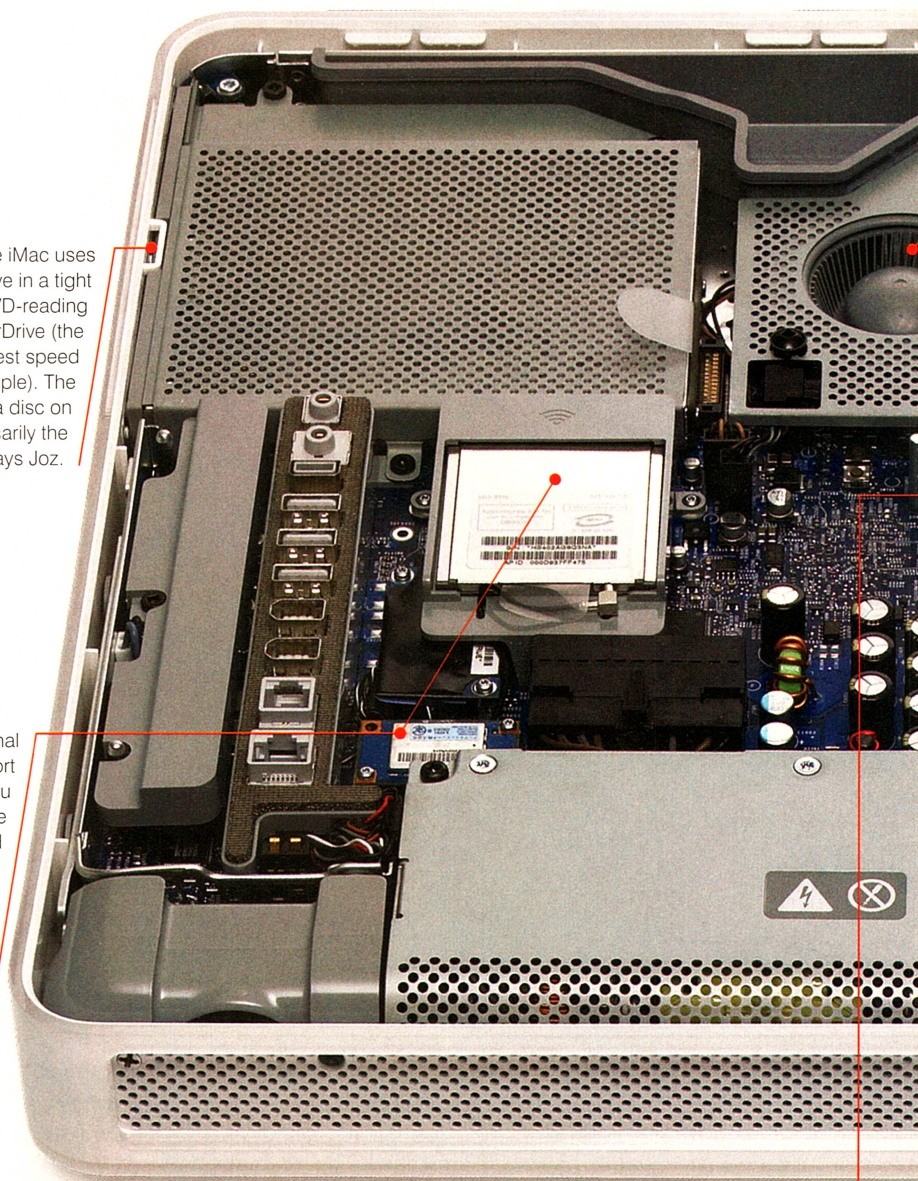
Even though it's not too difficult to imagine the new iMac G5 appearing soon on desks in every TV show, movie, and comic strip out there, there's more to the machine than just a new look.

Inside: guts of a new machine

Open up the new iMac G5 (it's easy: just loosen the three captured screws along the all-in-one's bottom edge and lift off the back), and you'll be struck by how clean it looks inside. There's none of the clutter and confusion you'd expect to be the result of cramming all those components into a case that's just five centimetres deep. Here's how Apple packed so much computer into such a small space.

Optical drive. Like Apple's iBook and PowerBook, the iMac uses a slot-loading mechanism to fit a full-size optical drive in a tight space. Models come with either a CD-burning and DVD-reading Combo drive or a CD- and DVD-burning SuperDrive (the SuperDrive is limited to burning DVDs at 4x, the fastest speed available in a slot-loading drive, according to Apple). The placement of the drive is also worth noting: you insert a disc on the right side, near the top of the iMac. "Not necessarily the easiest place to put it for us," says Joz.

AirPort/Bluetooth wireless. The iMac includes internal antennas for AirPort wireless networking, but the AirPort Extreme card is optional and easy to add yourself if you decide to buy one later. Support for Bluetooth — the short-range wireless protocol for input devices and accessories such as keyboards, mice, cell phones, and PDAs — is a little different. To get Bluetooth support, you must either add the internal Bluetooth module when you order or add an external USB module later.



LEDs. The iMac G5 introduces an ingenious system for troubleshooting problems. A row of green LEDs on the logic board act as a diagnostic tool for technicians or users brave enough to open up the back. From left to right: LED #1 turns on when the computer is turned off and the power supply is working correctly. LED #2 turns on when the computer is turned on and the power supply is providing power to the logic board. LED #3 will be turned on when the computer is turned on and the logic board is communicating correctly with the display. LED #4 only lights up if the computer overheats. In most circumstances LED #4 will be turned off.

Cooling. The G5 processor throws off lots of heat. To remedy that, the iMac G5 (like the Power Mac G5) has multiple cooling zones: one over the processor, one over the hard drive, and one over the power supply and logic board. ("We take a big heating challenge, and break it into smaller ones," says Joz.) The power-management system also pulses the fans only when, and only as fast as, necessary, keeping things cool and quiet. (Joz says that the new iMacs run at 25 dB — compared with 28 dB for the G4s and 32 dB for a whisper.)

Hard drive. With the Power Mac G5, Apple became one of the first computer makers to make Serial ATA (SATA) its standard hard-drive technology. The new iMac becomes the second Apple CPU to include SATA drives, which can be custom-configured to 250GB. SATA drives use smaller connectors and thinner cables — ideal for routing through tight spaces like the inside of the new iMac — and they also offer higher bandwidth for data throughput.

RAM. The iMac G5 includes two memory improvements over the last model. The first is speed: the new iMac uses 400MHz PC3200 DDR SDRAM — the same kind that powers the Power Mac G5, and a step up from the 333MHz RAM in the previous iMac generation. The second is that the iMac G5's two RAM slots can accommodate up to 2GB of RAM, twice that of the iMac G4. The angling of the RAM slots also means that the iMac takes standard RAM, rather than expensive slim chips. Note that iMac G5s ship with the same 256MB of RAM as the last iMac — the bare minimum for iLife and OS X.

Speakers. The new iMac's built-in stereo speakers replace the previous iMac's external Apple Pro Speakers (which were antithetical to the iMac's all-in-one mantra). According to Joz, "We knew this one had to be the ultimate when it came to designing an [all-in-one] iMac, so we needed to incorporate speakers". The iMac has a 12-watt digital amplifier built in, to power the stereo speakers. The speakers point downward, with the sound reflecting off the surface under the iMac. Joz says this design still "allows you to have nice stereo sound with separation and good range".

Graphics. The entire iMac G5 lineup comes with the Nvidia GeForce FX 5200 Ultra graphics chip with 64MB of DDR RAM (it's housed underneath the G5's heat sink). It's the same chip that came with the 17- and 20-inch flat-panel iMacs, and a step up from the 32MB Nvidia GeForce4 MX chip of the 15-inch iMac — but with 8x AGP support instead of 4x. As with Apple's laptops, the graphics processor is integrated on the motherboard, not on a card. That processor can, in theory, be upgraded — but only by having an authorised Apple service provider replace the entire mid-plane assembly.

Processor. The iMac's processor (beneath the heat sink) used to top out at 1.25GHz, so the leap in these new models to 1.6GHz and 1.8GHz is significant. The real news is that the processor has gone from the 32-bit G4 to the 64-bit G5. The G5 has two floating-point units (instead of the G4's one), can address more memory, and speeds up communication with that memory. The G5 chip has also allowed Apple to bump the frontside bus from 167MHz on the iMac G4 to 533MHz on the 1.6GHz iMac G5 and to 600MHz on the 1.8GHz iMac G5. The iMac G5 has the same 512K L2 cache as the Power Mac G5, but the consumer-level iMac has just a single processor; the entire Power Mac line now includes dual-G5 processors.

Back: behind the latest iMac

Even the back of the new iMac G5 is the result of some typically savvy Apple design decisions, such as the neat row of ports on the left — "I/O [input and output] doesn't naturally occur all in the same spot," Joz points out — or the way the screen moves smoothly when you adjust the tilt yet comes to a rest without jiggling. "There's a lot of technology, in what appears to be a simple design, to dampen motion quickly," Joz says.

Top. One of the more inspired design touches is a magnetic strip along the top of the iMac G5. Coupled with a new magnetic mount, this will be an elegant way to attach an iSight camera. Of course, you can also add fridge magnets or trinkets to personalise your Mac.

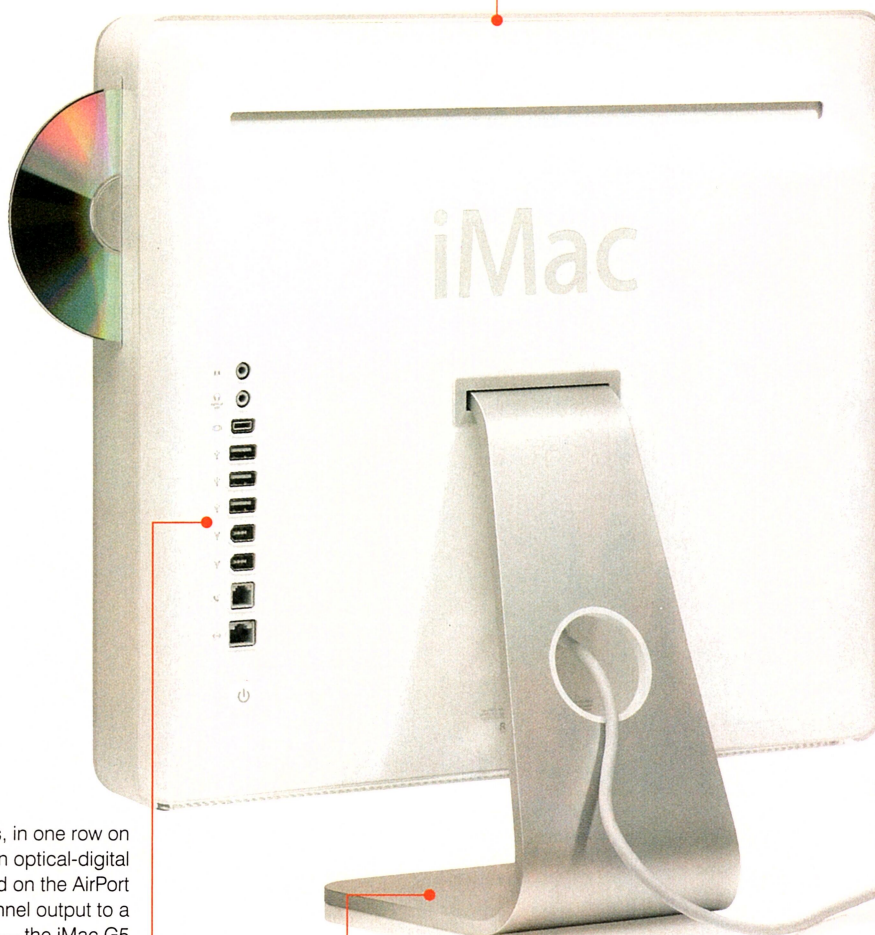


Ports. The iMac G5 has the standard complement of ports, in one row on the back. The analogue headphone jack doubles as an optical-digital output, using the same mini-Toslink connection found on the AirPort Express. With that connector, Apple brings native 5.1-channel output to a consumer Mac. Like its predecessor — and all new Macs — the iMac G5 includes fast USB 2.0 ports. FireWire 800, the faster version of Apple's data-transfer protocol, is missing. Those FireWire and USB 2.0 ports are particularly important because the iMac has no PCI slots. If you want to add extras such as high-quality audio-capture and -processing capabilities to the iMac, you'll need to rely on external USB or FireWire devices.

iMac: then and now

Here's how the top-of-the-line configuration of the new iMac G5 stacks up against its G4-powered predecessor.

System	20-inch iMac G4/1.25GHz	20-inch iMac G5/1.8GHz
RAM	PC2700 (333MHz) DDR SDRAM; 256MB standard, 1GB maximum	PC3200 (400MHz) DDR SDRAM; 256MB standard, 2GB maximum
Frontside bus	167MHz	600MHz
Hard drive	160GB Parallel ATA	160GB Serial ATA
Graphics	Nvidia GeForce FX 5200 Ultra (64MB)	Nvidia GeForce FX 5200 Ultra (64MB)
Weight	18.2 kg	11.4 kg
Audio output	analogue	analogue and digital (multichannel)
Price	\$3,899	\$3,199



Foot. With its flexible neck, the previous iMac allowed users to position the screen at all sorts of heights and angles. Instead of the lamp neck, the iMac G5 has a single foot attached to its back; this allows the display to tilt from -5 degrees to +25 degrees. You can't adjust the height of the screen, only its tilt. Apple insists that most users don't actually end up raising or lowering the screen, so it didn't build height adjustment into the foot. As for side-to-side swivelling, "We still have the ability to swivel left and right, but it does it on the entire base," Joz says. The foot actually mounts inside of the computer at the iMac's centre of gravity — making it easy to tilt. A hole in the foot assembly gives you a place to gather whatever cables you've got attached to the iMac. And you can detach the CPU from the foot and attach it instead to a wall mount or an articulating arm.

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Your say on online banking

THE last two months of NetWorth on internet banking compatibility provoked a wave of angry reader responses.

Christopher Stephens is a Westpac customer locked out of the "other accounts" option, which *AMW* previously revealed only works with Microsoft Java Virtual Machine on Windows. He says the banks should just keep it simple: "Westpac should use [cross platform] Sun Java for the Other Accounts option and keep online banking away from dependence on any OS or version of software. If it is kept generic it will run on all OSes and then should be fine for Mac."

Some readers are also unhappy with the instructions on Australian online banking sites for Mac users, pointing to a lack of proper testing and documentation at the banks. "Banks should include Mac-specific instructions where necessary, rather than re-hashed, ambiguous versions of their Windows instructions," complained Commonwealth Bank customer Matt Durie.

Joel Cooper, a St. George customer, agrees. "Most of all, if Safari works, at least document that it does! Acknowledge on your web site that it exists — it is the default OS X browser shipped with every single Mac, after all!"

We were sorry to hear from Keiron Low who wrote to say: "Your article gave St George Bank 4 1/2 stars in compatibility and caused me to re-think the possibility of internet banking. After making my application to St George I was sent a lovely letter advising of logon details."

But alas, upon logon a screen was presented stating "St George Business Banking is not yet available for Macs". (St George personal banking does work with Macs, but we're disappointed to hear that business banking doesn't.)

AMW contributor Martin Levins wants to ask his bank's CEO: "Would you deny access to your bank to BMW drivers?" We'd wager that although BMW drivers may only make up a few per cent of the population, any bank manager that would stop them walking in the front door would be hung out to dry by the bank's CEO.

Reader Isaac Roberts agrees. "If the online banking doesn't work with Mac, the bank has just lost five percent of its possible customers. Since that five percent can afford an Apple, they're likely to be proportionally more profitable, so the effect is even bigger.

"I can easily change banks. I won't change my computer," he concluded.

Good news. On the upside, other people have written to *AMW* to recommend their bank as being Mac compatible.

"The NSW Teachers' Credit Union is fantastic!" writes Chris O'Rourke. "I actually wrote to them when they first introduced net banking, when it wasn't Mac friendly. They politely replied and fixed things so that it worked soon after. It works with all browsers that I have tried."



Hot Links

www.lordofthecows.com/safari_enhancer.php
Safari Enhancer

As mentioned in last month's NetWorth, several readers said they had no problems with using Bankwest's online banking on Mac, contradicting the initial feedback which indicated it didn't.

Kevin Beermier says he "almost fell off his chair" upon reading that Bankwest doesn't work with Macs. "Only once did I have a hiccup, and that was fixed by using the 'Empty Cache' command in Safari.

"I am a Bankwest customer and, contrary to what was suggested in the article, have always used Safari — without a glitch — to do my online banking," he said.

As a sidenote, it's not just banks that are in the doghouse for not playing well with Macs. "Online billing sites in general can be arrogant," says Andrew Berry. "Vodafone, for example, told me I would have to use Netscape or Microsoft Internet Explorer to get around problems with their online billing web pages."

The Australian Tax Office is also being fingered for evasion of responsibilities to Mac users. Its eTax application for electronic submission of tax returns is still only available for Windows, despite Mac users waiting patiently for years.

*Equal Rights
FOR
MAC BROWSERS*

Tips and tricks.

It's certainly no panacea, but if you're unable to access your financial institution's online banking service, it's worth trying an old trick: set your browser to masquerade as another browser like Internet Explorer 6 for Windows.

To do this, download and install the freeware program Safari Enhancer (see "Hot links"). Run it, and change any insignificant setting (for example, make the font in the downloads window larger), and click apply changes. Re-open Safari, and in the new "Debug" menu that should have appeared, select "User Agent > Windows MSIE 6.0"

This makes Safari "fib" to the remote web server about what web browser it really is. It can tell the remote site that it's actually Internet Explorer for Windows, which will help in cases where web sites are actively rejecting Mac browsers.

Unfortunately, most banking web sites now let you use any browser, but just don't work well with some browsers. Safari Enhancer doesn't actually do anything to improve Safari's compatibility with sites that rely on Microsoft Internet Explorer for Windows technologies, but it may help you get through the front door.

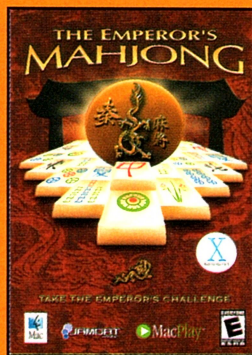
The most reliable workaround is still to use a Mozilla-based browser like Firefox, which uses the same code-base across all platforms, including Mac. Fortunately, it's an excellent browser with a great user interface, so it's not too annoying to change over to it to do internet banking.

Dan Warne is passionate about the state of broadband in Australia.

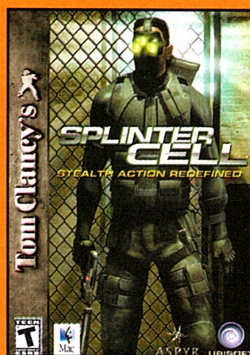
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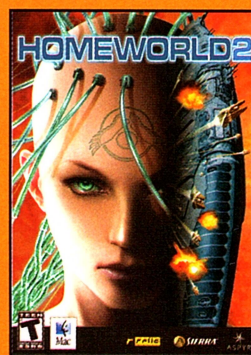
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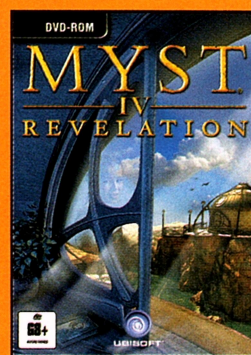
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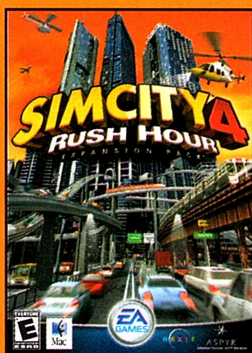
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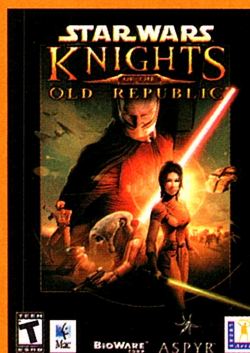
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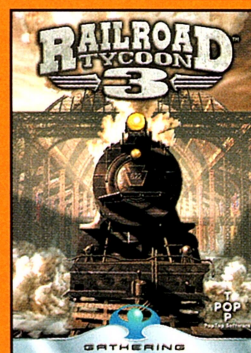
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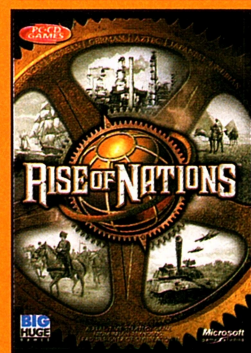
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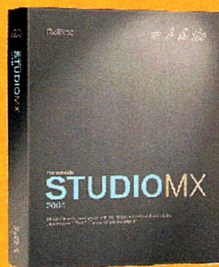
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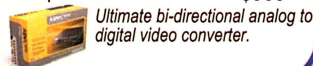
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The Hub

YOUR DIGITAL LIFESTYLE



PHOTO MAKEOVER

Alternatives to Photoshop

More iPod goodies | Wireless projectors | Profile: Proximity

By Philip Lucas.

Pixel fixers

IN The Hub I often talk about Adobe's excellent Photoshop CS application as my primary pixel fixer. There's good reason, of course: Adobe's Photoshop CS is, without a doubt, the industry standard when it comes to image manipulation and is the only tool most in the graphics industry will use. While that's all well and good, not everybody has the money to purchase Photoshop CS.

The main alternative for the rest of us comes in the form of iPhoto, which is capable of some manipulation, but is more useful as an image organisation tool as there's very little you can actually do with iPhoto. This is not to show any disrespect to iPhoto, merely to point out the limitations of an application that is designed for most people's digital imaging needs.

But what about the alternatives? Surely there have to be applications available to us Mac folk that actually fall between these two extremes. Indeed there are. And what's more, you don't have to break the bank.

Photoshop Elements 2.0

■ Publisher	Adobe
■ Distributor	Adobe Australia 1300 550 205
■ Hot links	www.adobe.com.au
■ RRP	\$159

It's not really all that surprising that the premier image manipulation program should have a more low-budget version for beginners. While the current version at press time of Photoshop Elements was 2.0, Adobe has recently announced that version 3.0 will be released sometime before year's end. Priced at just \$159, Photoshop Elements is bundled free with many digital cameras or scanners, making it the ideal complement for most beginner pixel pushers.

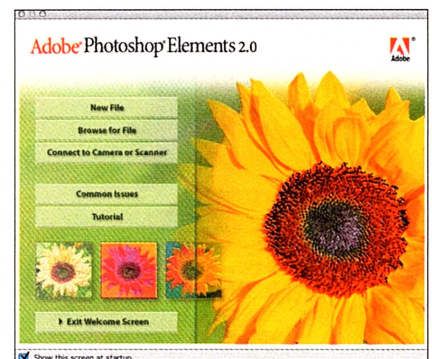
The key to Photoshop Elements's usefulness is the fact that it leverages much of the technology used in Adobe's flagship application, while at the same time incorporating a much simpler and more accessible interface. The result is a powerful application that has numerous How Tos and Hints — in readily accessible palettes — that enable you to get working very quickly and easily.

The core key features of Photoshop Elements 2.0 are those most relevant to amateur digital photographers, including Color Variations, Red Eye brush, Auto

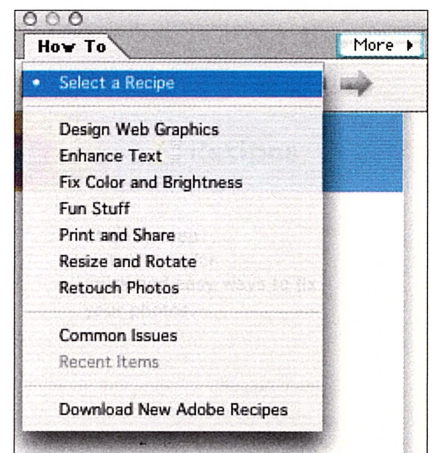
Levels, Auto Contrast, Auto Color, Adjust Backlighting, Flash Fill, as well as the crop and straighten tools. With just these sets of tools alone, you're able to correct about 90 percent of the things you need to fix with your digital images. You're even able to use adjustment layers, which allow you to make non-destructive changes to an image. While the fine control isn't present as it is with Photoshop CS, the core technology remains and contributes greatly to this application's usefulness for most photographers.

Adobe has also integrated more consumer-oriented features, such as a Photomerge capability that allows you to create seamless panoramas using several digital images of a scene. There are also a number of drawing tools and you can export out to a number of useful formats, including GIF animation and PDF slide shows.

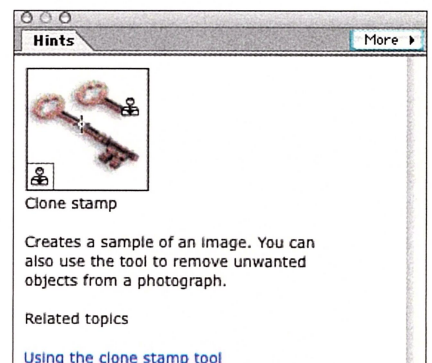
Some of the features to come in version 3.0 of Photoshop Elements include a spot healing brush, which essentially allows you to brush over areas to get rid of blemishes. Adobe will also include support for raw image formats and 16-bit colour, giving the application needed support for some of the more advanced compact digital cameras out there. There's also expected to be more integrated support with iPhoto, which should make existing users very happy.



Up and at 'em. Photoshop Elements's opening screen helps you get started quickly.



By the hand. A How To palette helps you figure out how to achieve certain effects in Photoshop Elements 2.0.



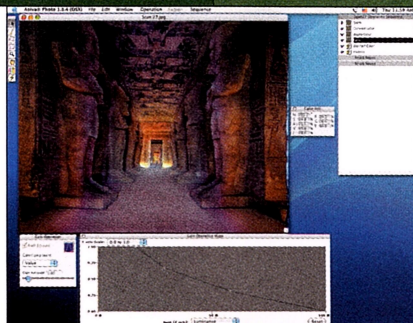
A few clues. When you select a tool, the Hints palette will give you information on that tool and ways in which you can use it.

Asiva Photo 1.3.2

- Publisher **Asiva**
- Distributor **Available online**
- Hot links **www.asiva.com**
- RRP **\$US378**

Photoshop has dominated the scene for so long that we often don't get around to discussing what alternatives there are, particularly when it comes to the idea of masks and using them for altering colour. Instead of working in the usual CMYK or RGB colour space, all work and adjustment in Asiva Photo is done in the HSV (Hue, Saturation, Value) colour space. This makes it quite easy to change a specific colour within an image as well as note variations in luminance, which might affect the application of such global changes.

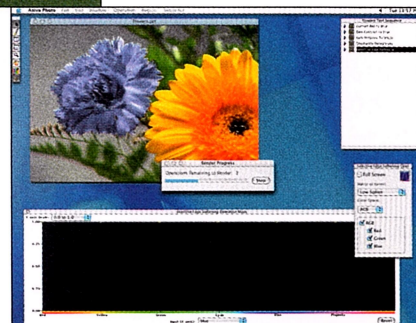
Avisa Photo utilises a 16-bit component colour work environment, although it does support 8-bit image files natively. Interestingly, rather like Photoshop with its adjustment layers, Avisa Photo takes advantage of what Avisa calls "operations" which apply changes on top of the original without actually changing the original



Grading on a curve. Asiva Photo allows you to add gain to specific areas of your image.

image file itself. The application uses vector-based transitions that are fully editable and then applied when you want to fully render the final image — this means that you work in a low-res version generally. You can save sets of these operations and use them again later with other images.

One of the ways Avisa Photo really shines is in its ability to do global colour changes. It's able to achieve this by allowing you simply select a colour using an eyedropper tool, adjusting a curve to establish the range of colour to be affected, and then applying a target colour that you've chosen using a colour picker. The effects you can create with this are quite startling and pretty



Flower tweaking. The powerful sharpening tool allows you to increase detail.

fast, though it may take some time to get used to the interface.

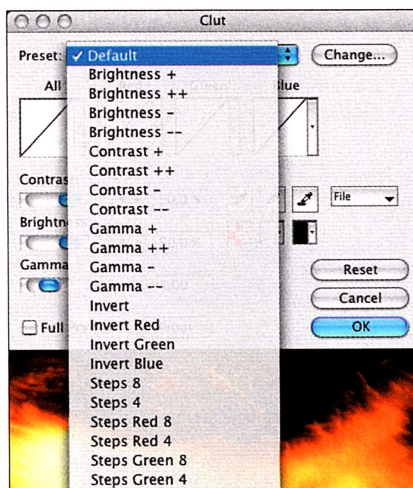
The only real problem with Avisa Photo is that costs around \$US400, which is a little pricey for something that you can't try before you buy. That's right, currently Avisa doesn't have a demo of this product available on its web site. While there's no doubting the power of this software, it's a little beyond the reach of most entry-level users, and even some professionals might balk at the price. However, if it really does interest you, check out the QuickTime movies on Avisa's site which give a quite detailed overview of how the application works — expect long download times (each tutorial is about 50MB).

PhotoLine 11.0

- Publisher **Computerinsell**
- Distributor **Available online**
- Hot links **www.pl32.com**
- RRP **€59**

At just a little over \$100 Australian, this application from German developer Computerinsell is probably the biggest value for money in a Mac-based image manipulation program you're ever likely to find. PhotoLine, which is at version 11.0 and also has a Windows version, shares many similarities to Adobe's Photoshop. In fact, in many ways, it's practically a clone. Even so, it manages to have some unique capabilities that make it particularly attractive to the novice user.

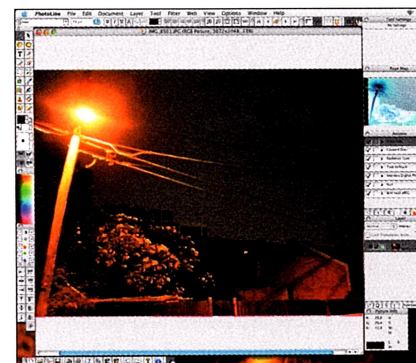
First things first: after using PhotoLine for a while, you'll begin to notice that this is very definitely an application that was originally developed in German. While many of the functions, menu bars and palettes are generally titled and labelled in English, there are the odd few windows here and there which are still in German. In fact, one function had the English in the Filter menu, but when the Filter dialog box came up, all of it was in German. It certainly makes finding your way around this app more fun than you would expect.



Language barrier. The mysteriously named Clut function helps you to adjust brightness and contrast quickly and easily.

Of particular interest is the enigmatically labelled Clut feature — I kid you not — which appears to help you sort out the brightness and contrast of your images. It comes with a large range of presets which do a very good job of improving images.

Apart from some excellent brightness and contrast controls, Photoline comes with a fairly large range of filters, some of which are artistic, and others which help you add lighting effects, blur and sharpen, not to mention distort your image in 2D and 3D.



Embarrassment of choice. PhotoLine comes with a mind-boggling array of palettes to choose from and can take a little while to master.

Simply put, PhotoLine is an amazing application considering the asking price. It contains many of the features that Adobe's Photoshop CS has and pulls them off quite well. That said, it does lack polish. The first time I opened the application, there were a good dozen floating palettes all over the place. That on top of the slight problems with German creeping in there obviously negates this being a top-of-the-line productivity app — you need your program to operate consistently in a production environment. However it's within reach of the average user, and the demo is only 7.5MB to download, so it's definitely worth checking out.

PhotoPerfect DigiCam & PhotoRetouch DigiCam

■ Publisher	Binuscan
■ Distributor	Available online
■ Hot links	www.binuscan.com
■ RRP	PhotoPerfect €35; PhotoRetouch DigiCam Free

These two applications from digital imaging powerhouse Binuscan represent the company's more consumer-oriented products. At the very top end of Binuscan's range of professional products is PhotoRetouch Pro, which is essentially a direct competitor to Adobe's Photoshop CS application. As a result, these programs take advantage of Binuscan's high-end technologies, but at the same time they are more accessible to the general digital camera-using public.

PhotoPerfect DigiCam is ideally suited to digital camera users who want to improve the quality of their images and apply those changes over a number of images. Generally speaking, you can choose a range of images that you want to adjust and then apply a filter them all at once. Alternatively, you can go through each batch and assign specific filters for individual images.

Another useful aspect of PhotoPerfect DigiCam is that you can get it to save a new version of the image automatically

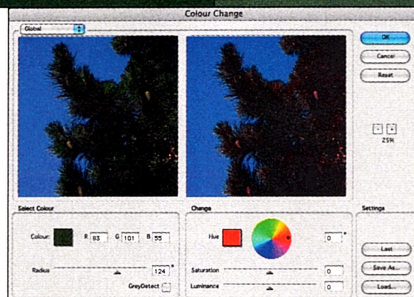
Microspot PhotoFix 3.5

■ Publisher	Microspot
■ Distributor	Available online
■ Hot links	www.microspot.co.uk
■ RRP	£35.10

If forking out several hundred dollars is not high on your list of priorities, then perhaps you might want to consider this quite modest application from UK developer PhotoFix. A sort of cut-down Photoshop Essentials, this application handles all your basic needs and in a way that would be familiar to most users of image manipulation programs.

As well as the usual set of tools, including the standard lasso and clone functions, PhotoFix comes with a very reliable set of auto adjustment features, such as auto level, auto colour and auto brightness/contrast. It's also possible to adjust a lot of these functions manually if you feel like having more control over the final image output.

There's even a modest set of filters that can be used to enhance your images. Among these is a dust and scratch filter



Truly astounding. The Colour Change feature in PhotoRetouch DigiCam is far more powerful than you would expect.

once you've applied your filters, thus keeping the original intact. There are also preset file size templates that allow you to prepare your images for whatever purpose you like, including sending via e-mail, or printing to photographic paper. At around \$A60, it's pretty good value, though you don't get the same level of individual pixel control as you would in applications such as Photoshop Elements or PhotoLine. The demo download for this is only 3.8MB.

Of course, if you're interested in doing a little more, than you should take a look at PhotoRetouch DigiCam. This application is freely available for download and represents a kind of cut-down version of PhotoRetouch Pro, which makes it more than worthwhile to download and try out. At 21.7MB it's not an insignificant download, but a lot smaller than Photoshop Elements, which is well over the 100MB mark.



Easy fix. It's a fairly simple process to change the brightness and contrast in PhotoFix and compare the results.

that is of particular use to anyone converting over their old 35mm slides and negatives into digital format. While it

If this is a cut-down version of PhotoRetouch Pro, what does it actually do? Rather a lot. In fact, it provides pretty much all of the same features as a standard image manipulation program — standard drawing tools, clone tool, vacuum cleaner tool (much like Photoshop CS's healing tool). There's also a reasonable (though not extensive) collection of filters, as well as a rather good selection of image enhancement processes that take up an entire menu. These enhancement processes are actually quite useful and allow you to accomplish many effects, including clearing out JPEG artefacts, sharpening, smoothing and even colour changing (a very powerful feature).

You won't come across many of the "web-friendly" features that you find in a lot of entry-level applications, but that's not really its focus. This is designed for serious image manipulation. Still, the interface is quite accessible, so it's a great way to just learn the basics.

You can achieve much more with PhotoRetouch DigiCam than with some applications that actually cost you money. What's more, the software is backed by an industry leader in image manipulation technologies. Do yourself a favour, download this and try it out. You will be amazed.

certainly doesn't have the grunt of an application like Photoshop CS, consider that it's less than a tenth of the price. I did have some trouble with quite large image files, but apart from that it performed very well indeed — a lot better than its cost would suggest.

While Microspot's PhotoFix would be a worthwhile complement for iPhoto, at only \$60 more you can pick up Photoshop Essentials, which comes with a wider range of filters. Nevertheless, PhotoFix is still superb value.

The last word. Despite what you may see here in The Hub from time to time, there's more to image manipulation than just Photoshop CS and iPhoto. There's actually quite a decent assortment of applications that cover a broad range of needs and functions, and that also won't hit you in your hip pocket.

The key to picking the right software — and how much you spend — all boils down to what you intend to use it for. If you're looking to do a lot of low-level changes to your digital photos, then applications such as PhotoPerfect DigiCam and PhotoFix are ideal for your needs. But if you're looking to do a little more with your photos, then seriously consider paying a little more to pick up PhotoLine or Photoshop Essentials. Or don't pay a thing and try out PhotoRetouch DigiCam. If you want to go further up the scale, then check the tutorials on Avisia's site and see whether Avisia Photo may suit your needs. ☒

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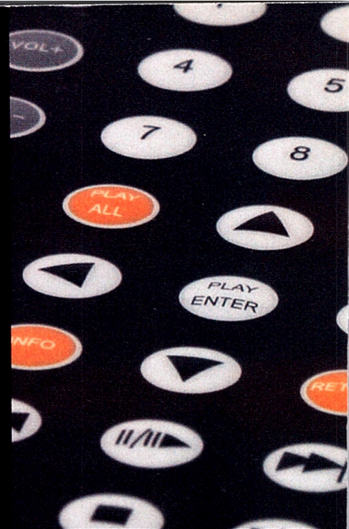
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By David Holloway.



Hot Links

www.steinberg.net/CubaseSX3

Right to the source

Cubase leaps ahead

CUBASE, like its competitors Logic, Digital Performer and Pro Tools, attracts attention when it announces a major upgrade. And SX3 looks like it is one major upgrade. A range of new features come online with this version. Some of the more notable include:

- User-defined workspaces: you can now save a workspace configuration for particular parts of the production process, or for different Macs.
- Users can now do real-time pitch shifting and time stretching of audio tracks. Loops dropped into a project automatically match the project's tempo, and even follow tempo changes in real time. For long-time Cubase users this feature alone may be enough to warrant the upgrade.
- New MIDI Device Panels give you direct access to MIDI hardware you own via graphical panels that the user can define. You are able to import your old VST Mixer maps into the improved functionality as well. Cubase is one of the leaders in MIDI features and has

continued to make progress here. Improved drag and drop for Standard MIDI files is another improvement in that area.

■ An Extended Freeze function: if you rely heavily on virtual instruments and find the CPU strain a little hard to work with during production, you can freeze virtual instruments to take some of the load off. The freeze can also be applied to the associated insert effects if you so desire.

■ Dummy plugins: if you are transferring a project to another computer with Cubase, and that computer doesn't have the same plugins, Cubase will substitute a dummy one so that when you take the project to the original computer all data is maintained.

Be prepared.

The system requirements for Cubase SX3 aren't for the faint hearted, but also not surprising given the feature set. At a



minimum you'll need a G4 867 MHz machine with OS 10.3.3 and 384MB of RAM to get started. You'll also need a DVD-ROM drive and a spare USB port for the copy protection key. Steinberg actually recommends a G5 1.8 GHz machine with 512MB of RAM as the preferred option.

Cubase SX3 is available now. It retails for \$1399, with education and upgrade pricing also available. For further information contact Music Link Australia on (03) 9765 656.

Portable studio

Portable FireWire audio interfaces are in increasing demand as iBooks and PowerBooks pack specifications close or equal to desktop Macs. The appeal of totally mobile audio recording is huge, both in productivity and creativity terms. M-Audio's M-Box and the Mackie Spike are two of the better-known options out there. Ego Systems Inc (ESI) has thrown another option into the mix with the QuataFire 610. It's a very compact unit — one third of a rack space. Crammed into that real estate are six audio-ins and ten audio-outs. There are two XLR/combo audio inputs that allow microphone, line level and instrument connections: you determine which input it will be via a switch. There's a headphone output with separate volume control. Overall audio performance is up to 24-bit/192kHz. Add in MIDI-In and -Out and S/PDIF-in and -out and there's not a lot of room left.



The whole shebang is bus powered with external power a supplied option as well. The supplied manual is quite extensive and walks you through interfacing the unit with the major audio software flavours. Of course being a Mac compatible product, just about any application should be able to utilise the Quata 610 by configuring CoreAudio correctly. ESI does recommend installation of its driver to get full functionality.

One final qualifier: Mac support for this product is a recent thing. There was a problem with version 1.08 of the FireWire audio driver, leading to limitations in functionality on the Mac. When version 1.09 was

released as part of OS 10.3.5, these issues are largely resolved. The Quata 610 was primarily aimed at the Windows XP market, so potential for glitches is arguably higher. To ESI's credit however, it has flagged the issues as they have arisen and have posted firmware updates on its web site.

If you want a compact FireWire audio and MIDI interface with a range of input options, then the Quata 610 is worthy of consideration. The system requirements are OS 10.3.4 or higher and a FireWire enabled Mac. The Quata 610 is available now and costs \$799. Contact Sound and Music on (03) 9555 8081.



Hot Links

www.esi-pro.com

Details and updates for the QuataFire 610



Hot Links

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 EarJams and RoadTrip
www.bose.com
 SoundDock
www.tunewear.com
 Prie range of cases
www.macskinz.com
 Wedgee

New iPod gear

IT'S getting to the point with iPod accessories that there's something new released most weeks. In most cases it's just a new brand proving a variation on a theme, but the fact is the iPod has become not merely a platform but an industry in itself. Here are a few of the latest offerings.

Griffin EarJams. It would be a brave person who would argue that the earbuds supplied with the iPod are the pinnacle of sound quality. They certainly aren't bad, but there's always room for improvement. Griffin Technology has adopted this motto with the EarJams.

A common criticism of earbuds is their reduced ability to pound out bass frequencies without causing distortion of sound quality. That's the main aim of the EarJams: to increase bass response and also increase overall volume by around 10db.

The pack includes three sets of EarJams in different sizes to ensure you get something that actually fits your ears. The EarJams themselves just clip over the standard earbuds with the foam covers removed (for ear-wax obsessives, the EarJams are washable). A carry-bag is also supplied if you're inclined to carry all three sets around.

The claim for increased volume is achieved through the fact that earbuds with EarJams attached lodge further into your ear canal, therefore there is less intrusion of other noise. Griffin claims increased comfort with the EarJams but I imagine that may be a personal preference thing depending on how much you like a larger protuberance in your ear. The EarJams retail for \$35 and can be

purchased online from Griffin or from Aussie distributor Memory Solutions (03 9645 3806).

Griffin RoadTrip. Also from Griffin comes the RoadTrip. This unit essentially combines two products Griffin offers separately — the iTrip and the PowerPod — and adds a cradle as well. This means that in the one unit you can charge your iPod and play it back through your car's FM radio. Having it all in one certainly beats having three different units, particularly if you are going to leave an iPod connected in your car most of the time. The cradle is adjustable and will take any 3G or 4G iPod in addition to the iPod Mini. The FM transmitter is an improvement on the iTrip in that you can adjust the frequency using buttons on the unit itself, so there's no need to navigate via your iPod. The FM transmission module is also removable which means you can hook it up to your computer using the supplied cable and then play back music through your nearest FM radio. The RoadTrip retails for around \$145 and again is available from Griffin direct or from Memory Solutions.

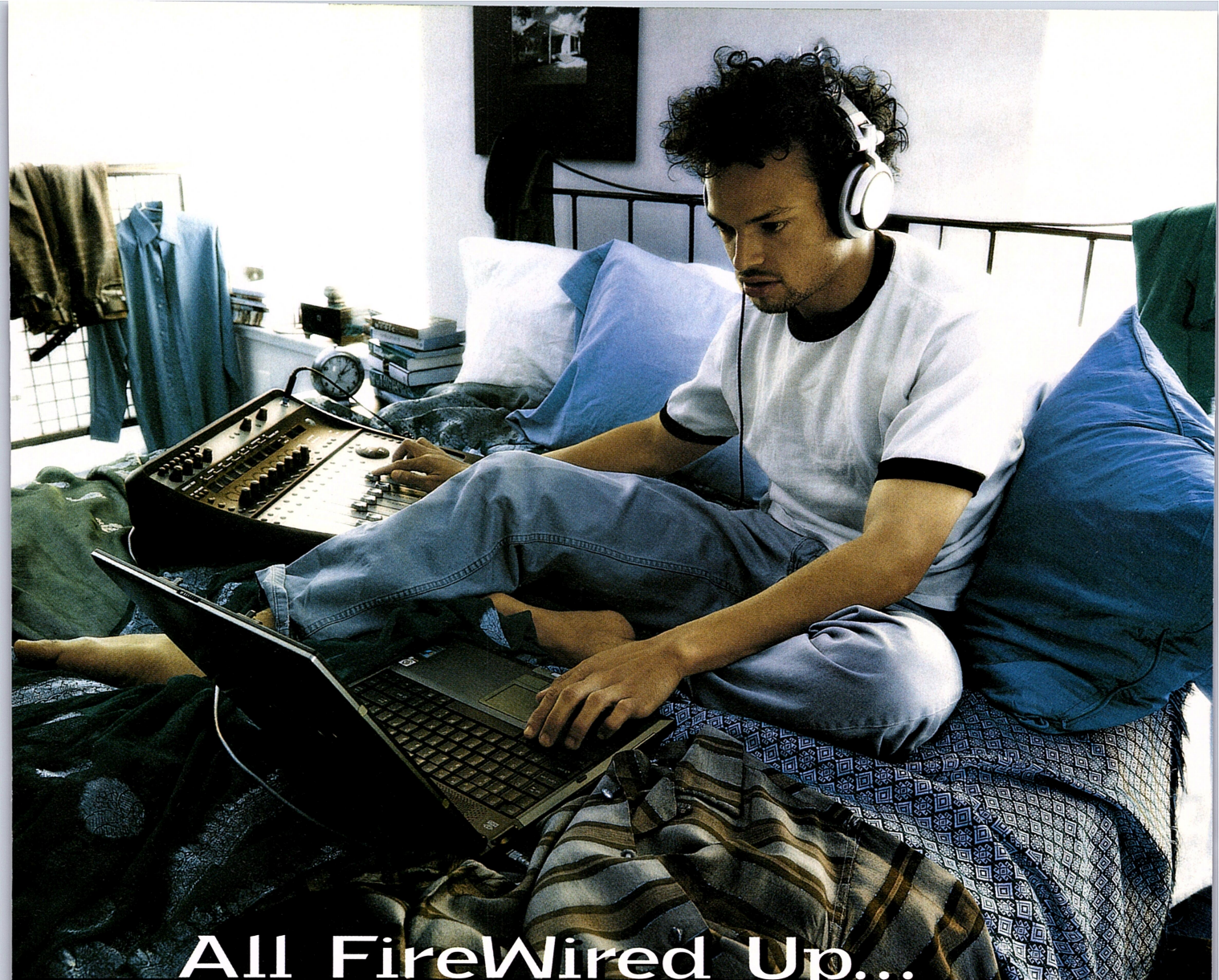
Bose SoundDock. One of the coolest new products to hit the market is the SoundDock, made by Hi-Fi specialist Bose. This is one of those products that would attract the true audiophile iPod enthusiast. The concept is simple: build an iPod dock into a Bose speaker system. Like most Bose products, there is a unique style and compact footprint. Connection involves plugging the SoundDock into a power source, then docking the iPod. Like a regular dock, the SoundDock will charge the iPod when it is inserted.

The SoundDock will be available in Australia by November. For more information contact Bose Australia on 02 8737 9999. Australian pricing had not been finalised at time of writing. It retails in the US for \$US299.

TuneWear. Now for something specifically for the iPod mini. The Prie range of cases give you 16 variations on the theme to choose from — four colour choices, two different designs and two different types of straps. The Lime Green and Pink colour options are at least a toe in the water toward more gender representation in iPod accessories. All options allow full access to the FireWire and headphone ports. These cases are certainly something a little different from the range of plastic covers out there. It's worth having a browse at the other TuneWear products on offer as well. The Prie range retails for \$75 and the Australian distributor is Conexus on 02 9975 2799.

MacSkinz Wedgee. If you want an iPod stand that's makes a bit of a statement, then the Wedgee may be for you. What can I say about this product? It's a platform made from clear acrylic on which you rest your iPod. It will hold all iPod variations and even the odd PDA. Adjustment is made via knobs at the base, with the knobs being either black plastic or stainless steel depending on price point. There are holes to slot your earbuds and that's about it. The Wedgee is only available for purchase direct from the MacSkinz web site. It retails for \$US30 (black plastic knobs) or \$US35 (stainless steel knobs).





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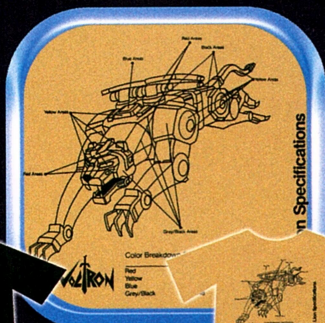
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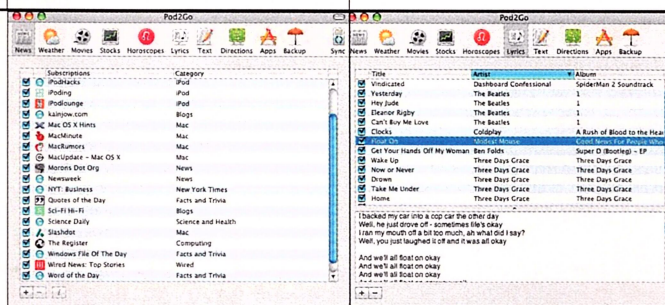


By Anthony Fordham.



Hot Links

www.kainjow.com/pod2go
Download the software



Jukebox or PDA?

PART of the appeal of iPod is its support for third party applications that expand the usefulness of the device. Version 1.0.2 of Pod2Go is new software by Kainjow which connects iPod to a number of news feeds and automatically updates each time iPod is synced.

Kainjow claims the application comes with more than 1000 pre-loaded feeds, and the user can add more as desired. The program also has weather downloads for most cities globally, as well as a stock watch function.

Other features such as horoscopes, movie times and directions to popular locations are geared toward US users. Kainjow CEO Kevin Wojniak says he is currently

investigating incorporating other sites, starting with Canadian movie times and then moving on to the rest of the world.

Wojniak bills Pod2Go as a PDA for people who don't want a PDA. It can sync Address Book contacts, iCal calendars, unread mail messages, Stickies notes and Safari bookmarks.


An automated backup feature also syncs selected files using iPod's disk mode, which must be enabled for the software to work.

Pod2Go also makes use of iPod as a song player, with a feature that seeks out and downloads lyrics for songs or albums selected from the iPod's library.

Once installed, Pod2Go places an icon in

the menu bar, which accesses the iPod menu. Users can quickly sync all Pod2Go tools, or select a specific tool for quick syncing. The menu also provides a handy eject shortcut.

Wojniak says the program has been tested and works with all generations of iPod, and will automatically determine whether to use the Contacts folder (first and second generation) or the Notes folder (third and fourth generation).

Kainjow's other products include BiblePod, which loads an electronic version of the King James Bible, and DockIP, allowing used to view their current IP address from the dock. 

Wireless iPod?

BLOGS the length and breadth of the internet are abuzz with speculation that Apple might be considering a wireless version of its world-beating mobile music player.


The rumour stems from a recent Apple job advertisement that says the iPod group is looking for a hardware engineer. While most of the advert is pretty standard stuff, one paragraph does stand out:

"Experience in the following areas is

important: system integration, digital logic, SDRAM, Flash, ASICs, processor selection, ATAPI, various communications protocols (ie: GSM, Bluetooth, IEEE 802.11, FireWire and USB), display types and video and analog integration," says the advert.

GSM, Bluetooth and IEEE 802.11 are all wireless protocols, which could signal wireless capabilities in upcoming generations of iPod, some observers believe.

A wireless iPod would come as no

surprise, since AirPort now supports streaming of audio directly from computer to audio device, and it would be simple to replace the computer with an iPod. Watch this space. 



Hot Links

www.macrumors.com
Good source of scuttlebutt

PalmOne's Mac advantage

THE latest version of PalmOne's high-end PDA, the Tungsten T5, continues to rely on the features of existing OS X applications, rather than bundling its own software for Mac, according to a company spokesperson.

PalmOne spokesperson Leigh Jewiss says there is no need for new software for syncing the T5 with Mac, because OS X apps such as iTunes and iPhoto do the job "better than we ever could".

"We are including new applications with the PC version of the T5, because Windows doesn't come with a good MP3 encoder or good picture management software," he says.


As a result, while PC users will need to install new versions of Audio Player and RealPlayer to upload multimedia content to their PDA, Mac users will be able to continue use their current versions of iTunes and QuickTime.

"We are including an app called Kinoma which will convert QuickTime files into a PalmOne format, and for the first time we are including native support for Mac PowerPoint files," Jewiss says.

PalmOne is using software from third-party conversion specialist DataViz to handle PowerPoint and other files. There will also be third party support available for Microsoft Entourage users.

The Tungsten T5 will continue to use

Desktop 4.1, which has been out for around 18 months, says Jewiss. Even though most Macs already have all necessary software for working with the T5, Desktop 4.1 will provide a diary system and PIM apps if required.

"The PalmOne range of PDAs remain the only PDAs in Australia that sync natively with Mac, and we continue to believe this support for Mac users gives us a definite edge in the market," Jewiss says. 



Hot Links

www.palmone.com.au
Local home of PalmOne products



Hot Links

www.ivision.com.au
InFocus projectors
www.epson.com.au
Epson projectors

Wireless home projectors

THE next generation of digital data projectors will include wireless adaptors to take advantage of the increasing number of wireless-equipped notebooks.

Epson (02 8899 3666) and InFocus (1800 624 977) have both released new WiFi projectors this quarter, aimed at the business or education institution that needs to display from a number of different sources each day.

Epson's EMP740 (\$4399) and EMP-830 (\$6099) have built-in 802.11g receivers, and Epson boasts the

projectors include a proprietary compression algorithm that allows faster MPEG streaming than any other projector on the market.

"They are the only projectors to offer wireless compatibility with Apple's Keynote software, and they accept high-resolution JPEG images or streaming MPEG video wirelessly, from USB memory devices, including thumb drives and digital cameras, or a PCMCIA card," says Epson Australia business manager Bruce Bealby.

Both projectors include WEP and WPA security protocols for encrypted networking. The EMP-745 is designed with portability in mind, weighing only 1.8kg. The EMP-830 is intended to be a company work-horse, able to go from off to displaying an image in about 20 seconds.

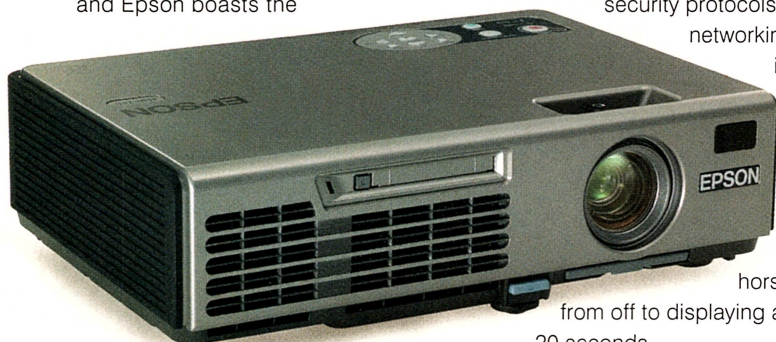


InFocus has created a device called LiteShow which plugs into the DVI port on a range of its projectors. The benefit of LiteShow is that it is a low-cost wireless solution and doesn't require the purchase of a whole new projector.

LiteShow is an 802.11b adaptor with a maximum bandwidth of 11Mbps, and utilises the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) for secure WiFi.

InFocus also has a PC-free projector, the LP600 (\$4999). Its embedded LitePort USB connector accepts any USB thumb drive loaded with JPEG images, so the user can present a slide show without a PC. Included LitePort software converts documents into high quality JPEG and saves them to a removable USB storage device.

The LP600 uses a Texas Instruments DLP, the DDP2000, providing 2000 lumens and a contrast ratio of 1000:1. It also automatically detects a ceiling installation, making it a doddle to set up in a lecture theatre.



3G phones redux

WHEN we looked at 3G phones a couple of issues ago (Hub Mobile, 09.2004 to be precise) we were unable to look at Sony Ericsson's Z1010 in detail for a number of reasons. Since then we managed to get our hands on a review unit and, at almost the same time, Apple updated iSync to 1.5, including support for this very phone.

So is the Z1010 a proper partner for your Mac. Is it what — I was able to browse files on the phone and transfer to and from the device smoothly. I could make short videos on the phone, transfer them over to the Mac and edit them in iMovie as if it was second nature. Likewise creating short videos in iMovie and saving them to the phone was a snap.

No more downloading cacophonous MIDI files to use as ringtones, either — grab a song from your iTunes library, trim it

using QuickTime Pro and copy the MP3 over to the Z1010. The phone even automatically places MP3s in the right folder for use as ringtones.

Creating calendar events on the phone was easy and when synchronised to the Mac they showed up correctly. With most phones, even others from Sony Ericsson, some data associ-

ated with calendar items can be lost in the transfer, so I was pleasantly surprised at how well it worked with the Z1010.

I'm still unconvinced that video phone calls are particularly useful. However, if you want a phone that can double as a basic PDA, and you also want to be able to create and share video content with the same device, the Z1010 is hard to beat. I've said before that Sony Ericsson's Z600 was the best phone partner for the Mac, but the Z1010 quite possibly pinches that crown. ● *Matthew JC. Powell*



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Get a closer look

Pro File — Proximity



PROXIMITY is an Emmy award-winning Australian company that has become a dominant player in the broadcast and post-production world. It offers rich media asset management and workflow optimisation solutions to all the world's biggest broadcasters — NBC, CBS, FOX, CNN, and BBC along with many others.

I spoke to Tom Mander and Matt McManus from Proximity about their work and their thoughts on Macs in the broadcast environment.

AMW: *How much of your broadcast development focuses on the Mac platform?*

Tom: Certainly the Macintosh has always been an important part of our development support. In general we find that the environments we deploy into have a big range of equipment. One of the strengths of our system is we don't really care where the data is situated. We can connect to various devices, whether they be embedded high-end systems, video servers or simply network attached storage. You'd rarely find one of our clients that doesn't use Macs somewhere. So supporting Macs has always been part of our product plan.

AMW: *How do you manage cross-platform access to your solutions?*

Tom: A lot of it has been done through a web browser to gain the multi-platform client access. With our new Artbox product we're now moving to a much more sophisticated Java client. That's partly been permitted by the maturity of Java as a platform now — we can now have a very sophisticated client that looks and feels like a native application and have that work on Windows, Linux, Mac,

Silicon Graphics, Irix. Anything that's got an up to date Java VM. We find that we only need to make relatively minor tweaks to the software to make it work seamlessly on a Mac. Although often a source of frustration is the slow progression of the Sun JVM through to the Mac.

Matt: They're much better now than they were. They're now up to 1.4.2.

Tom: But that does also require having the latest version of Mac OS, which isn't always feasible. Clients are sometimes holding back on an old version for application support.

AMW: *Can you give us an example of a client working largely on Macs?*

Matt: Prime TV has about 14 stations across Australia. They decided to centralise post-production in Canberra and made the decision to use the Mac platform for all their non-linear editing. What they have is a Media 100 LE system at each of the spoke stations and then the post-production gets done by a larger team in Canberra.

With our system there is no more need for jobs to be moved around by tape transfer, which cost a great deal in both user time and in courier costs. Jobs are now simply copied across the network between workstations and between formats for editing and for broadcast. Basically, jobs that used to take more than four days can now be done in less than a day.

If they went to Final Cut Pro, which they've actually tested, the change is just the file formats on each end and we support a huge range of file formats both in still and clip formats. Our software will just basically ingest whatever format it gets and just spit it out to whatever format the device is defined as.

AMW: *So how many other clients have a large Mac presence?*

Tom: Where Mac is the predominant graphics creation device that can often be in some of the smaller sites. On the larger sites you tend to find more of a mix. They can afford the mix. There are some pieces of work that are still very well suited for these dedicated embedded systems.

That said the line is starting to blur. As the power in the general purpose machines like G5 Macs and the like continue to increase it is amazing what you can produce on these machines. So while these high-end systems are still used for doing a lot of pieces of work, certainly what we see is the Macintosh and Windows PC being used progressively for more and more work. And certainly work that in the past only these high-end machines could do.

Matt: With Final Cut Pro, we're actually seeing it eroding into some of the more high-end packages.

Tom: Certainly with the new high-def version of Final Cut Pro.

Matt: In terms of local broadcasters, SBS use Macs. They do all their stuff on Macs. Channel nine use Macs. ABC use Macs. They all use Macs!

AMW: *Does your team use Macs at all for development work?*

Tom: A lot of our developers also like Macs. Several of them, their most recent laptops have been a Mac. Although we all come from a very hardcore Linux heritage, it's interesting to see more and more of us are getting a Mac as well.

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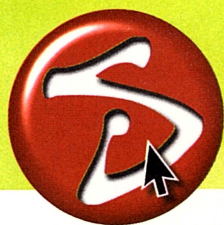
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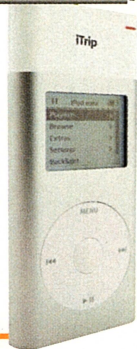
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The days of our lives

IN the day-to-day running of the business of education, there's a real need to collaborate and calendars are pretty much central to this. Collaboration is defined by our old friend the Oxford English Dictionary as "working jointly to accomplish a task", although there is a corollary: "cooperating traitorously with an enemy". Perhaps this is for those needing to share with Windows.

It's this very issue that has caused the demise of Macs in many educational institutions.

I've spoken of collaboration before, most recently in *AMW* 01.2004, in connection with students collaborating in class. However, when the staff of an educational institution collaborate, it's usually much more boring: organising meetings, who has to be where, when and with whom.

In Queensland and the Northern Territory, the need for collaborative services has meant specification of Microsoft Exchange and this has meant specification of the Windows platform as teacher and administration machines. Despite what dual-platform wizards tell us, the perception remains that a single platform is easier to manage.

Sure, Macs can connect to an Exchange server, but the only Mac app that will talk to Exchange using the Microsoft proprietary Messaging Application Programming Interface (MAPI) protocol is Entourage 2004. MAPI enables calendaring of events and meetings, scheduling, turning e-mails into scheduled tasks and other really useful things. Unless institutions install an Exchange server (not ideal — Exchange has typically a high cost-to-benefit ratio in terms of management) and make sure Mac users use Entourage, organisational collaboration is difficult.

Changes coming in Tiger will improve the situation in terms of messaging with iChat, and, of course, Mac servers already come preinstalled with industrial strength (and standards based) e-mail and webmail servers, but there are shortcomings in terms of centralised personnel directories and calendaring.

Tiger is not yet feature-finalised (at the time of writing) but we really need to see both of these shortcomings addressed. In particular, Apple's directory services, or at least their implementation of The Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP), needs some fixing so that Workgroup server doesn't put "99" into the surname of each user. (Apple must have some Maxwell Smart fans lurking in Cupertino.)

After adopting the iCal protocol for the OS X native calendar, Apple has really not made much progress in being able to share the calendar, other than opening up WebDAV as a sharing mechanism rather than having to use a .Mac account.



Hot Links

phpicalendar.net

Put your shared iCals onto the web

www.mozilla.org/projects/calendar/

Mozilla calendar on PCs can read Mac-published iCals

calendars.as.edu.au/php/

Our school's calendar as represented by phpicalendar

www.mmissoftware.co.uk

iCalMaker imports and exports data from iCal

Our friends (or enemies, dependent on the nature of the collaboration) can use their own iCal or Mozilla Calendar to read our published iCals, and we can provide web-based access by using phpicalendar (see "Hot links"), provided our server has a compatible version of php on board.

An open source project, phpicalendar will present an iCal published calendar as a web page, parsing the iCal information and presenting a very nice interface to the user. The following scenario then becomes possible. A school's admin assistant can hold the master calendar on his or her machine and publish it to the school's web server. Teachers or students can then use their local iCals to subscribe, and parents can look. But these collaborations are read only, and I want more than one user to write to the calendar for true collaboration. For example, I can publish my calendar to my administrative assistant, but he can't make changes, and vice versa. To

allow both people to make or change appointments, I have to resort to having two calendars: one that my secretary publishes and I subscribe to and another that I publish for him to read.

Not pretty.

There are always problems with users writing to the same file but surely writing the iCal data to a multi-user open source database such as PostgreSQL or MySQL wouldn't be that difficult? After all, Microsoft can do it.

One more thing: what if I want to export my iCal data to, say, InDesign (or even Word) to make a printable calendar? iCal will export calendar data in iCal format (a .ics file) but this does not resemble a printed calendar at all.

Enter the shareware product "iCalMaker" from MMISoftware in the UK (see "Hot links"). This will take almost any data format into and out of iCal, providing decent data for not only paper-based publishing, but virtually any other application, exporting to Mail and to a variety of comma- and tab-delimited file formats.

All of this is a bit of a patchwork, and not the seamless cloth that I expect from Apple.

So send an e-mail to sjobs@apple.com and tell him that sales to education are being and will continue to be lost unless a true collaborative environment is forthcoming. I know that Australian Mac sales only represent two percent of global sales for Apple but, interestingly, that's fairly close to its global market share.

Are you with me? ☞

As an educator, Martin Levins likes empowering people to create using computing technologies.

By David Blatner, Kevin Connor, and Ben Willmore.

Manipulate pixels like a pro

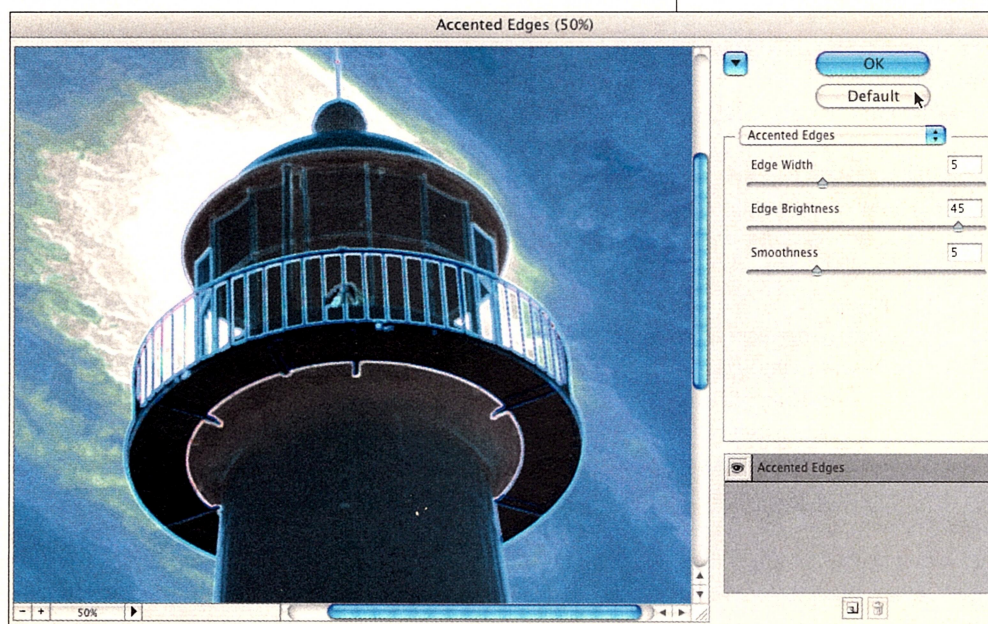
Photoshop top tips

CREATIVE professionals in almost every field use Adobe Photoshop CS. The program owes its popularity to a long, diverse list of features, but this complexity also makes Photoshop difficult to master. No matter what kind of work you do, the following tips will help you sharpen your Photoshop skills – and may even introduce you to aspects of the application you haven't encountered before.

Get three lassos in one. Photoshop CS has three lasso selection tools – Lasso, Magnetic Lasso, and Polygonal Lasso – and each is a separate item in a fly-out menu. When you use the Magnetic Lasso tool, you have the power of all three without having to go back to the Tools window. To select a free-form shape (as you would with the normal Lasso tool), hold the option key and drag within your image. To create straight segments in your selection (as you would with the Polygonal Lasso tool), hold down the option key and click on multiple areas of your image (without dragging). Release the option key to restore the Magnetic Lasso tool to its normal behaviour. •BW

Set filter defaults. You can change the default settings for any filters that use the new Filter Gallery dialog box within Photoshop. Just choose Filter: Filter Gallery, select the filter you'd like to work with from the pop-up menu, modify its

Change filter defaults. The Filter Gallery dialog box, new to Photoshop CS, makes it easy to change default settings.

**Hot Links**

www.adobe.com.au
Where Photoshop comes from

setting, and ⌘-click on the Cancel button (see the screen shot "Change filter defaults"). •BW

Control the file browser. You can open the File Browser by clicking on its icon (which looks like a folder and a magnifying glass) on the right side of the Options bar. ⌘-clicking on that icon will hide all the visible palettes and cause the browser window to fill your screen. When Photoshop is active, you can also drag a folder from the desktop onto the File Browser icon to navigate to that folder in the File Browser instantly. When you double-click on a file to open it from the File Browser, hold down the option key to simultaneously close the File Browser. When you're opening a RAW-format image, you can hold the shift key to open the image directly in Photoshop, bypassing the Camera Raw dialog box altogether. •BW

Preview in the background. If you find that Photoshop takes too much time to generate thumbnail and preview images for all your files in the File Browser, choose Preferences from the Edit menu in the File Browser and select the Allow Background Processing option. This will allow Photoshop to create thumbnails and preview images while you spend your time checking your e-mail and browsing the internet. •BW

Autoflatten layers. Do you have a large TIFF or PSD file with a lot of layers and wish you could open it as a flattened file?

No problem – hold down the option and shift keys while double-clicking on the image in Photoshop's File Browser or in the Open dialog box. Choose OK when asked, "Read the Composite Data Instead?" Note that this method works for a PSD file only when the file was saved with a composite image, which is the default. •DB

Crop to an aspect ratio.

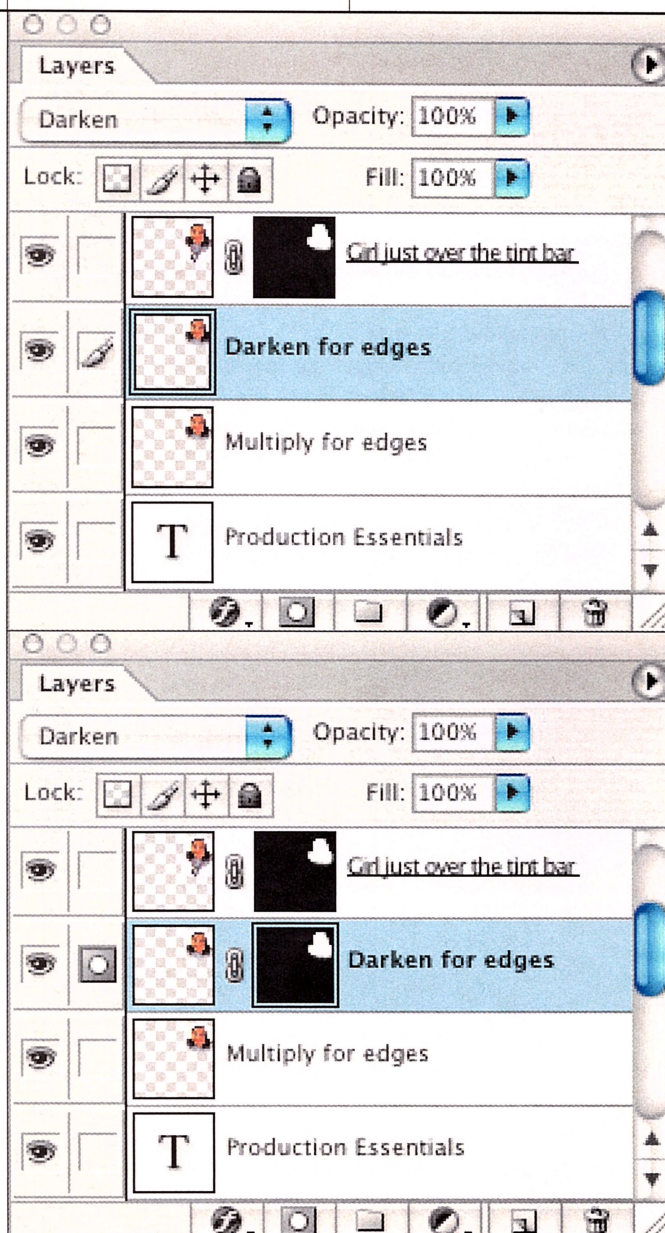
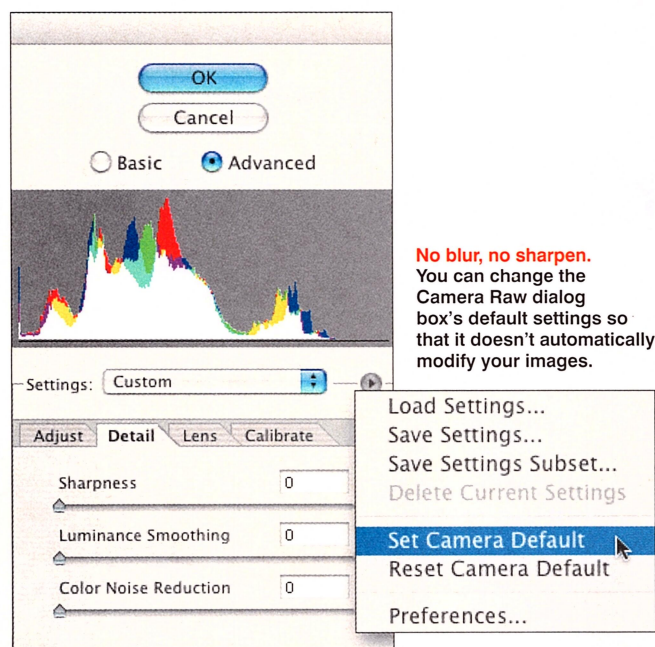
Before sending digital photos to an online printing service, you may want to crop the images to the common print size, 4 × 6 inches. Just don't use Photoshop's Crop tool, which can't crop an image without also changing

its resolution. Instead, select the Rectangular Marquee tool and choose Fixed Aspect Ratio from the Style pop-up menu in the Options bar. The Options bar then lets you type values in the Height and Width fields (here, type 4 and 6 or 6 and 4). Then use the Rectangular Marquee tool to select the area you want cropped, and select Crop from the Image menu. •DB

Change Camera Raw defaults. By default, Photoshop CS's Camera Raw dialog box blurs (in an attempt to remove noise) and then sharpens every RAW-format image you open. To change the defaults, open any RAW-format image, and when the Camera Raw dialog box appears, choose Camera Default from the Settings pop-up menu. Now select the Advanced option in the upper right corner of the dialog box and click on the Detail tab. Change both the Sharpness and the Color Noise Reduction settings to 0 (zero) and then choose Set Camera Defaults from the menu to the right of the Settings pop-up menu (see the screenshot "No blur, no sharpen"). •DB

Control your batch processing. The File Browser is the most convenient launching point for your batch operations, particularly if you want to control the order in which the files are processed. Simply drag and drop to move the files in the desired order, and then select only those files you want to process. The selected files will be processed in the order in which they appear. You can even process files that sit in different folders. Just flag the files first or add a common keyword or other metadata to all of them, and then perform a search for the desired flag or metadata. The files will appear in one view, where you can change their order and then batch-process them. •KC

Apply a layer mask to another layer. When you've perfectly masked one layer using a layer mask and want to apply the same mask to a second layer, just click on the layer to which



Layer your layer mask. It's easy to apply one layer mask to a second layer in Photoshop CS.

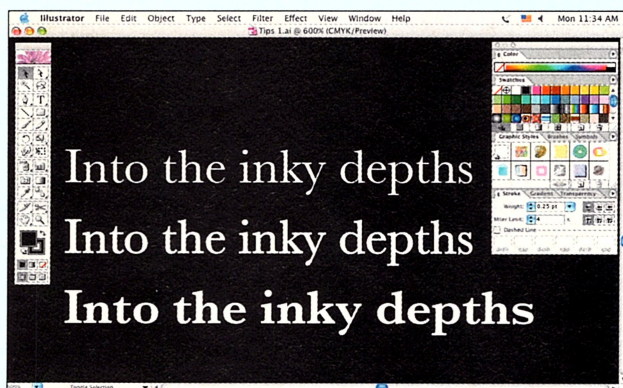
you'd like to apply the mask, click on the layer mask you want to copy (but don't release the mouse button), and drag it to the Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. That copies the layer mask you dragged to the active layer (see the screenshot "Layer your layer mask"). •BW

Switch layers quickly. If you're tired of mousing over to the Layers palette every time you want to switch to a different layer, choose the Move tool, hold down the ⌘ key, and click on any visible area of the desired layer within the main image window. Once you've done that, Photoshop makes that layer active. •BW

Take command of brush-tool settings. When working with the Brush tool, you can use your keyboard to change all the settings that appear in the Options bar at the

Control headroom

You're trying to make text sit below the top of an Illustrator frame. Logically, you go to **Window: Type: Paragraph**, choose **Show Options** from the fly-out menu, and tweak the **Space Before Paragraph** control. Nothing happens. This is because Illustrator's First Baseline alignment is set to **Ascent** by default. To move it down, select the text frame with the selection tool and go to **Type: Area Type Options**. In the resulting dialog box, set **First Baseline** to **Leading**; then, with the first line of text selected, adjust your leading to position the text vertically. The leading control defines the distance from the first baseline of the text to the top of the frame. • *Jim Felici*



Be bold but not too bold. When a typeface isn't the right weight for reversing out of black, you can customise it in Illustrator.

top of your screen. Press the square-bracket keys ([and]) to change the brush size, and add the shift key to that command to change the softness of the brush. Hold shift and press the equal sign (=) and hyphen (-) keys to cycle through the choices that are available in the Blend Mode pop-up menu. Press the number keys to change the Opacity setting (03 equals 3 percent, 23 equals 23 percent, and so on), and add the shift key to change the Flow setting. Press shift-option-P to toggle the Airbrush option on or off. • *BW*

Get out of trouble fast. If one of Photoshop's tools isn't acting the way you expect it to, you can reset it by holding down the control key, clicking on the tool icon that appears on the far left of the Options bar, and choosing **Reset Tool**. • *BW*

Copy image sizes. If you want to create a new Photoshop image that's the same size as one that's already open, press **⌘-N** to bring up the New Document dialog box, and then select the open file's name from the bottom of the Window menu. The Window menu is still active when the New Document or the Image Size dialog box is open. • *DB*

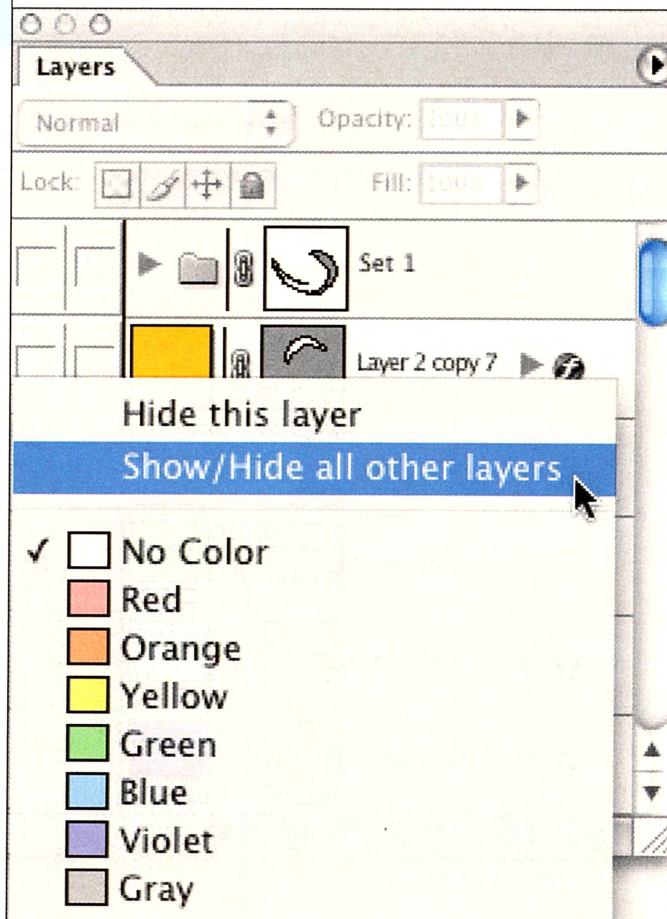
View all layers. In previous versions of Photoshop, option-clicking on an eyeball icon in the Layers palette toggled the visibility of all other layers in the palette. In Photoshop CS, option-clicking twice on a layer's eyeball icon brings back only the layers that were visible when you first option-clicked on that

eyeball icon. To make all the layers visible in Photoshop CS, control-click on the eyeball icon and then choose **Show/Hide All Other Layers** from the resulting pop-up menu (see the screenshot "Visible layers"). • *BW*

Zoom into web images. You can use Viewpoint's ZoomView technology to export high-resolution images as fast-downloading, zoomable images. Go to **File: Export: ZoomView**, and follow the instructions. Individuals, such as photographers posting their online portfolios, can register for a free license to host these images on their web sites. Companies running larger web sites usually need to purchase a license from Viewpoint. • *KC*

Move transparent objects magically. With the Patch tool, you can move a transparent object — such as a glass — from one location in a photo to another. Select the Patch tool and draw an outline around the transparent object. Select the **Transparent** option (in the Options bar) and drag the object to the new location, where the object automatically blends with its new background. Of course, it's not really magic, and there are limits. This trick works best when the object is against a plain original background. • *KC*

Visible layers. In Photoshop CS, making all layers visible is a little more involved than it was in previous versions.



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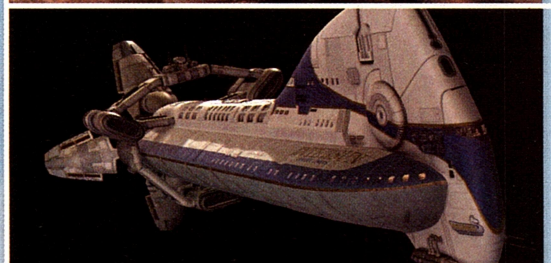
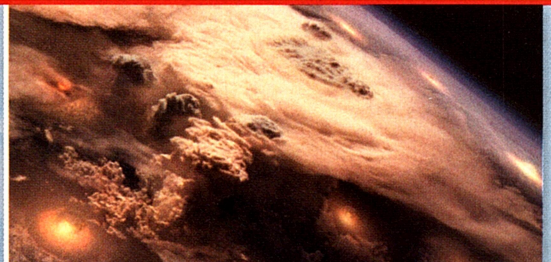


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Emile Smith
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By Jonathan Knudsen.

Program MindStorms with your Mac

Killer Mac robots

MAYBE you've always wanted to make C-3PO or R2-D2, or wondered whether you could create a Roomba Robotic Floorvac yourself. Whatever your motivation, the Lego MindStorms Robotics Invention System has everything you need in order to build robots. So you buy it, take the kit home, and build something brilliant — only to discover that the software is Windows only.

Can't you use a Mac to program robots? Of course you can! Several excellent Lego robot-programming tools exist for the Mac, many of them free. I'll show you how to get started with one of the most popular tools, MacNQC.

About Lego robots. The Lego MindStorms Robotics Invention System (RIS) kit contains more than 700 Lego bricks, including motors, sensors, gears, wheels, and a robot brain called the RCX. You can write programs for the RCX on your computer and then download the programs to your robot via an infrared link. The kit includes an infrared USB tower that you plug into your computer so it can talk to the RCX.

So what can you do with all this stuff? Whatever you want. Imaginative builders from around the world have built robot bugs, pets, tanks, plant waterers, lawnmowers, chess players, and just about everything else. You won't be making C-3PO or the Jetsons' Rosie, but you're going to have fun and learn a lot. In fact, many teachers now use Lego robots to teach programming to beginners of all ages.

Meet MacNQC. Although there's Windows-only software in the regular MindStorms box, the clever and dedicated Lego robotics community, composed of enthusiastic fans worldwide, has created a wide variety of alternative RCX programming environments.

NQC (Not Quite C), originally developed by Dave Baum, compiles text source files and can download the compiled programs to the RCX. In its purest form, NQC can be a little uncomfortable for people who don't live on a command line. Fortunately, there's MacNQC (see "Hot links"), an excellent GUI version of NQC that runs in OS 9 and OS X. At this writing, the current version of MacNQC X (the version for OS X) was 3.0 r2.



Hot Links

mindstorms.lego.com
MindStorms
www.legoeducationstore.com
RoboLab software — coming soon for OS X
homepage.mac.com/rbate/MacNQC/
Not Quite C
mindstorms.lego.com/sdk2beta/
Get RCX firmware
www.oreilly.com/catalog/linstorms/building/
Instructions for building some robots
lejos.sourceforge.net
Java programming for Lego robots
news.lugnet.com/robotics
Lego Users Group

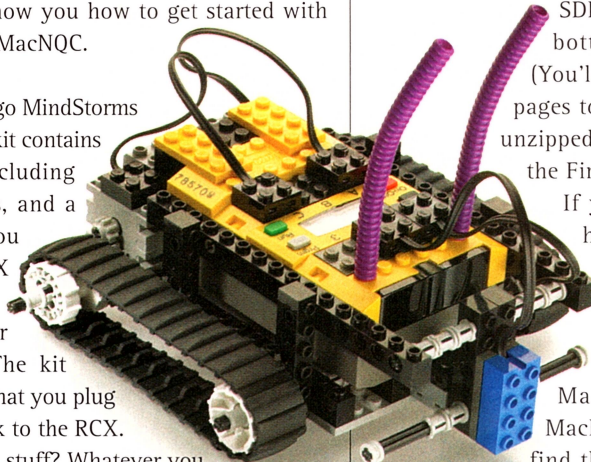
MacNQC quick start. The first thing you need to do to start programming robots with MacNQC is install firmware on the RCX. The RCX is a very tiny computer. Like a Mac without system software, or Frankenstein without a brain, the RCX can't do much by itself. The firmware serves as a kind of operating system, enabling you to download and run your own programs.

MacNQC does not come with its own firmware; you will use the firmware that Lego supplies with the RIS kit. The easiest way to get the firmware file is to download the RCX 2.0 Beta SDK (see "Hot links"). Click on the link at the bottom of the page to download the SDK. (You'll need to click through one or two more pages to get to it.) Once you've downloaded and unzipped the SDK, copy the `firm0328.lgo` file into the Firmware directory of your MacNQC folder.

If you don't have an internet connection handy, you can get the firmware file from the RIS disk, but you'll need to install the RIS software on a Windows computer first. Then you can copy the firmware file from Windows to your Mac and install it on the RCX using MacNQC. On the Windows computer, you can find the firmware file in `\Program Files\LEGO MINDSTORMS\RIS 2.0\script\Firmware\firm0328.lgo`. Copy it to your Mac and place it in the Firmware directory of your MacNQC folder.

At this point, you're ready to plug in the infrared tower and start up MacNQC. Turn on the RCX and place it near the infrared tower. Choose RCX: Download Firmware from the MacNQC menu. MacNQC will find the firmware file you just copied and install it on the RCX. Be patient; this takes a couple of minutes. With the firmware installed, you're ready to start playing.

Choose RCX: Motor And Sensor Panel from MacNQC's menu. This window allows you to control motors (outputs A, B, and C) and view sensor readings (inputs 1, 2, and 3). For example, you can see the current reading of a light or temperature sensor. To turn on a motor, click on one of the green arrows for forward or reverse, and then click on the Start button. To view a sensor value, first choose the sensor type from the pop-up menu and then click on Refresh to get the sensor values from the RCX.



Programming choices

You can't use the Windows-only software that comes in the MindStorms box, but you can use Lego's Robolab software for OS 9, which also runs in Classic. (An OS X version is promised for October 2004 on the web site — see "Hot links" — but hasn't appeared as of press time.) In this visual environment, snap together little program blocks, such as Set Power or Tone. When you're finished, click on a button to download the program to your robot for testing. This is a good choice for younger robot builders or those with little computer experience.

Also, don't miss the cool kits sold at the Lego Education site, such as the Robolab Intelligent House Building Set, which you can use to create a working model of an automated home.

If you're familiar with Java, try the free leJOS (see "Hot links") an environment based on the Java programming language.

Ready your robots! Programming in NQC is simple. Let's start with a rudimentary example: a program that makes a robot move forward for one second and then stop. If you haven't built a robot yet, make a basic one, such as my own RoboTag or Trusty (see "Hot links").

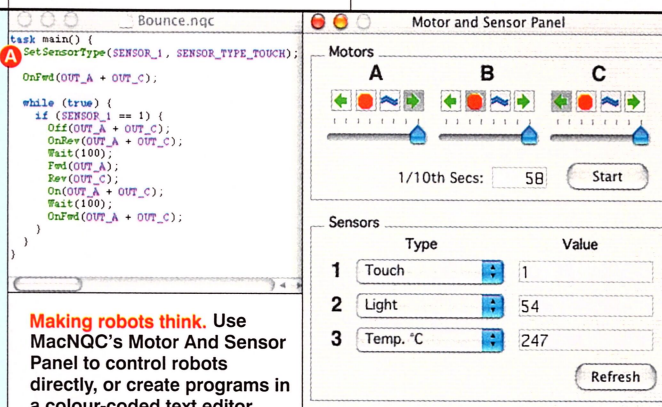
I'll assume you have a robot that uses motors A and C to move. All the program has to do is turn on the motors, wait one second, then turn them off.

In MacNQC, create a new file and enter:

```
task main() {
  OnFwd(OUT_A + OUT_C);
  Wait(100);
  Off(OUT_A + OUT_C);
}
```

The commands in this program are all straightforward. You just need to remember that the Wait command accepts a time measured in hundredths of a second, so Wait(100) means "wait for one second".

You can save the file if you want, but it's not necessary for testing. Make sure that your RCX is turned on and that the infrared tower is pointed at it; then click on the toolbar button that looks like 1s and 0s. MacNQC will download your program to the RCX. (Your robot will chime when it has received instructions.) To try the program out, press the Run button on the RCX.



If you'd rather just check your program for errors without downloading it, click on the red check-mark button. MacNQC will tell you about any errors it finds in a separate error window. Double-click on an error to go to that spot in your program.

The next example (see the program in the screenshot "Making robots think") moves the robot forward until it bumps into something. You'll need a robot with a bumper on the front, connected to input 1. (The bumper should press a touch sensor on input 1 when the robot bumps into something.) Also, motor A should control the left side of the robot; motor C, the right side. RoboTag will work for this project. After a bump, the robot will back up, turn right, and then drive forward again.

The SetSensorType line **A** tells the RCX that a touch sensor is attached to input 1. Next, the program moves the robot forward. If the bumper ever touches anything (that's when SENSOR_1 equals 1), the robot backs up for one second, turns for one second, and then starts moving forward again.

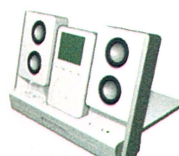
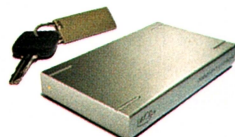
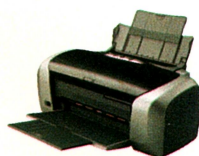
When you're ready to do more, check out the comprehensive documentation for the NQC language, and information about MacNQC, available from the Help menu.

Welcome to a new world. By now you should be pretty pleased with yourself. You have successfully used your Mac to program Lego robots, and it didn't cost you anything.

You are now part of an amazing global community whose nexus is LUGNET, the Lego Users Group Network (see "Hot links"). You'll find other enthusiastic, brilliant people who like to build Lego robots. Browse or search the archives for project ideas or information about troubleshooting, advanced programming, and building techniques. Or you can join (for free) and participate in the discussions.

Now go forth and program robots with your Mac. Have fun!

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By Dan Frakes.

Keep secrets secret

The Keychain's hidden powers

PASSWORDS, serial numbers, ATM codes — we're all swimming in a sea of information that's secret (or should be). Make it easy to remember, and someone may pinch it. Make it hard to guess, and you may forget it yourself. Mac OS X has the answer: the Keychain. Here's how to use the Keychain in OS X 10.3 to hide all sorts of information, from password hints for web sites to notes on a confidential business deal.

Keychain Access. If you've ever entered a password in your web browser or e-mail client, or provided a password for an encrypted disk image, your Mac has probably asked whether you'd like to save that password to your Keychain. In addition to accessing your Keychain through these dialog boxes, you can work directly with your Keychain via Keychain Access (Applications: Utilities).

When you launch Keychain Access, you see a list of all the items in your Keychain, including information about each item's name, kind, creation date, and modification date. If you haven't opened Keychain Access before, most of these items will be passwords — internet passwords, application passwords, disk image passwords.

Select any password item to bring up information about that item at the bottom of the window: the item name and kind; the account name (if applicable); and the specific URL, application

Keychain First Aid

Because the Keychain manages so many different pieces of information, it may eventually develop minor corruption, causing problems — for instance, the e-mail client may repeatedly ask for your account password, or the Keychain may fail to save your .Mac password.

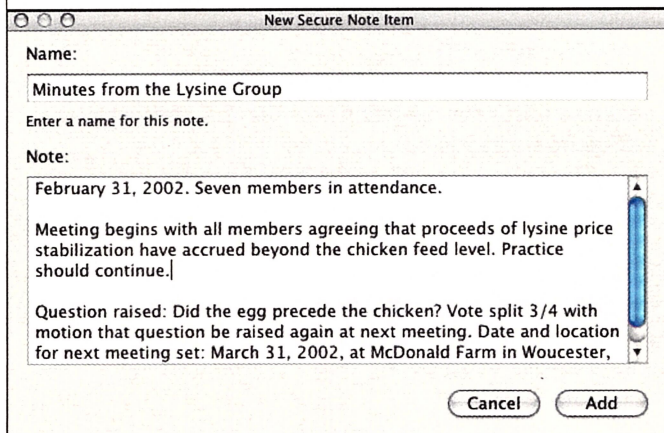
When this happens, you need Apple's Keychain First Aid. In Mac OS X 10.3 and later, you'll find it in the Keychain Access Window menu; if you have an earlier version of OS X, you must download it as a separate utility from Apple's Web site (see "Hot links").

To repair your Keychain, enter your user name and password, select Verify, and click on Start. If the utility finds any problems, you'll see a description of each and you'll get a prompt to repair them. Select Repair, and then click on Start. (An administrative user can also verify and repair other users' Keychains, though without the ability to see the details.)



Hot Links

docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=107234
About Keychain First Aid



Don't pass this note. OS X's Keychain goes beyond password protection. You can store secure notes in it, too.

name, or disk-image name for which you use the password. You can view the actual password by selecting the Show Password option and entering your Keychain password. To paste a password into another application, click on the Copy Password To Clipboard button. You can also add comments about the item — say, to remind you what a particular item is for, or to include a web site's password hint and answer.

You can edit any of these fields by clicking in the field; however, the Comments field and the password field (which isn't labelled but appears just below the Show Password option) are the only ones I recommend touching. Make password field changes only if your password has actually changed. When you're done editing, click on the Save Changes button.

The Access Control tab lists the applications allowed to access each item. Although you can manually change these settings, errors are less likely if you use the dialog box that appears when an application requests access to your Keychain.

Add your own secrets. Beyond application passwords, the Keychain is a great place to store ATM-card PINs, software serial numbers, and other sensitive data. To add a new password item, click on the Password icon in the Keychain Access toolbar. Give the new item a name (for example, ATM PIN), enter the account or user name associated with the password (if applicable), and then enter the password or passphrase you want stored in the Keychain. Click on Add to save the new item.

Save notes securely. The Keychain can also store secure notes. These are just snippets of text, but because they're part

of your Keychain, they're safe from prying eyes. To create a secure note, click on the Note icon in the toolbar. Give the note a name; then type your note text or paste it in from another application, such as TextEdit, Microsoft Word, or your e-mail client (see the screenshot "Don't pass this note").

A secure-note item works much like a password item: you can see information about the note in the Attributes panel at the bottom of the Keychain Access window. By selecting the Show Note option and providing your account password, you can view the note itself.

You can delete Keychain items – notes or passwords – at any time. Simply select an item and press the delete key (you can also click on the Delete icon or choose Edit: Delete). OS X then permanently deletes the item.

Test your password

Have you ever wondered just how safe your user password is? With Keychain Access, you can get a sense of your password's relative strength, as well as some pointers on how to make it stronger.

Launch Keychain Access. Select File: New Keychain, and then enter a name (Test Keychain, for example) and location in the resulting dialog box. It doesn't matter what you name this Keychain — you won't be saving it. After entering a name and a location, click on the Create button.

In the next dialog box, click on the circular button with an i in it (next to the question-mark button) to open the Password Assistant dialog box. Enter your password in the Password box, and note the resulting score and warnings in the Password Assistant area. If your password is too simple, Password Assistant will tell you so and suggest ways to make it stronger. Passwords that result in a red graphic in the Quality area are of minimal value and are relatively easy to break. Try to pick a password that generates a score high enough to display a fully green bar, but make sure you can easily remember it. The safest password in the world does you no good if you have to keep it written down on a piece of paper near your computer.

When you're done experimenting, click on the Cancel button. You'll see an error message about failing to create the Keychain, but you can ignore it. • Rob Griffiths

Keep your keys safe. Now that you've stowed your valuable data away, it's time to lock the Keychain itself. This is a useful feature when you're stepping away from your computer and you want to make sure no one can access Keychain items.

You can lock your Keychain by launching Keychain Access and clicking on the Lock icon in the toolbar, but if you lock your Keychain frequently, a more convenient method is to enable the system-wide Keychain menu. From within Keychain Access, choose View: Show Status In Menu Bar. This adds a menu extra (a padlock icon), to your system-wide menu bar. You can then lock the Keychain by clicking on the icon, choosing Lock Keychain Name, and entering your Keychain password. As a bonus, the menu's Lock Screen command lets you immediately turn on OS X's screen saver — and turning it off will require a password, even if you don't have this feature enabled in the Security preference pane.

You can also set your Keychain to lock automatically after a period of inactivity. (In Keychain Access, go to Edit: Change Settings For Keychain Name.) Just be aware that each time an application accesses the Keychain qualifies as activity — so if your e-mail client stores your account passwords in the Keychain and checks for new mail frequently, your Keychain may never lock automatically. Another option is to tell the Keychain to lock when your Mac goes to sleep; when you wake your computer, you'll need to enter your password before you or any application can access your Keychain.

Change the locks. By default, your Keychain password is the same as your OS X account password, and OS X unlocks your Keychain when you log in. If you'd rather do the unlocking yourself — so that nothing and no one can access your confidential data until you explicitly authorise it — you can disable this behaviour in your Keychain's settings or, more securely, change your Keychain password (Edit: Change Password For Keychain Name). Click on the i (info) button in the Change Keychain Password dialog box to view the Password Assistant, which shows how secure your new password is. (For more on the Password Assistant, see the sidebar "Test your password".)

Explore your keys. Having your confidential information fall into the wrong hands is no joke. If you exploit the full powers of OS X's Keychain, your secrets will remain just that — secret. 🔒

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by Jim Heid.

Create CD inserts in iTunes

Musical pictures

The iPod and iTunes are great, but sometimes you still need a CD. Maybe you want to listen to music compilations on a long car trip. The problem is, all store-bought CD-Rs look pretty much the same: boring.

TO give your burned CDs more panache – and to clarify what's on each one – why not print an insert that slides into the disc's jewel case? You won't even need to switch programs. Apple includes printing features in iTunes 4.6 that let you do this and more.

When printing a case insert from iTunes, you can choose from a variety of designs called themes. In countries where the iTunes Music Store operates, these themes can take advantage of the



Hot Links

www.apple.com.au/itunes

iTunes

homepage.mac.com/gklein1/FileSharing1.html

Get Artwork — a great for, er, getting artwork

album artwork that accompanies Music Store downloads – someday, maybe, we'll have that here. Meanwhile, you can put your own artwork on a jewel-case insert with a few clicks of the mouse. CD inserts are also a great way to produce a hard-copy reference of your music library and favourite playlists.

Finding CD artwork. iTunes can store album artwork – for example, an image of the CD cover – along with your music. The artwork is embedded into a music file itself, so if you move the file to another Mac, the art moves with it.

To display it, click on the Show/Hide Artwork button in the lower left corner of the iTunes window (see the screenshot “View art”). From the Artwork pane, you can specify how iTunes displays images, choose between multiple images (if there's more than one), or even add new images.

What about all the songs in your library that don't have artwork? If you'd like to add art to them, you have several options. Some free utilities will search for and retrieve artwork over the internet; Most of these utilities simply look up the name of an album on Amazon.com and then retrieve the artwork from Amazon's site.

You can of course do this manually if you wish.

Modify artwork settings.

You can also view and modify a song's artwork via the Song Information dialog box. Select a song in iTunes, choose Get Info from the File menu (or press ⌘-I), and then click on the Artwork option.

As I mentioned, songs can contain more than one image. Keep in mind that each image increases the size of your music file, thus leaving less free space on your hard drive and iPod.

To import a new image into the list, click on Add. To delete an unwanted image, select it and click on Delete.

When creating a jewel-case insert, iTunes uses the first

Choose source. To switch the artwork display between the currently playing song and the currently selected song, click here.

Add images. To display the artwork in a larger window, click here. To add a new image to the currently selected song, drag the image here. To copy the art into another program, drag it from here to the program.



Switch images. A song can contain multiple images. Clicking on the little arrows displays the next or previous image associated with the song.

View art. To see album art for a particular song, click on the Show/Hide Artwork button in the iTunes window.

India.Arie and Zero 7

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. Intro / India.Arie | 0:50 |
| 2. Vidéo / India.Arie | 4:10 |
| 3. Promises / India.Arie | 4:37 |
| 4. Brown Skin / India.Arie | 4:56 |
| 5. Strength, Courage, & Wisdom / India.Arie | 4:57 |
| 6. Nature / India.Arie | 4:24 |
| 7. Back To The Middle / India.Arie | 5:11 |
| 8. Ready For Love / India.Arie | 4:28 |
| 9. Interlude / India.Arie | 1:24 |
| 10. Always In My Head / India.Arie | 4:40 |
| 11. I See God In You / India.Arie | 3:17 |
| 12. Simple / India.Arie | 3:26 |
| 13. Part Of My Life / India.Arie | 4:03 |
| 14. Beautiful / India.Arie | 4:05 |
| 15. In Time / Zero 7 | 4:56 |
| 16. Speed Dial No. 2 / Zero 7 | 3:49 |
| 17. Over Our Heads / Zero 7 | 4:24 |
| 18. Morning Song / Zero 7 | 6:30 |
| 19. Look Up / Zero 7 | 5:57 |
| 20. Passing By / Zero 7 | 4:51 |
| 21. Warm Sound / Zero 7 | 5:30 |

Printed with iTunes



ZERO7
WHEN IT
FALLS

Print "Road Trip"

Print: ☒ CD jewel case insert
☐ Song listing
☐ Album listing

Theme: ☒ Text only
Mosaic
White mosaic
Single cover
Text only (Black & White)
Mosaic (Black & White)
Single side (Black & White)
Large playlist (Black & White)

Page Setup...

Cancel

Print...

Instant art. Create a theme for your jewel-case insert by going to the Print dialog box. iTunes adds crop marks to the edges of the finished image to help you get a perfect cut.

image listed in the Artwork Information dialog box. If you have multiple images listed there, you can rearrange their order by dragging them left and right. To use a specific image in a jewel-case insert, drag it so it's the first image in the list.

You can also print your own artwork – for example, a photo from your iPhoto library – on a jewel-case insert. First, add the image to a song. (For a photo, simply drag it from the iPhoto window to the Artwork area in the Song Information dialog box.) Drag the image so it's the first one in the list; then print. To reduce the size of the song file, delete the image after printing.

Printing a jewel-case insert.

Step 1. Select a playlist in the Source area, and then choose Print from the File menu.

Step 2. Click on the CD Jewel Case Insert option (see the screen-

shot "Instant art"). You'll also see options here for printing several types of song and album lists.

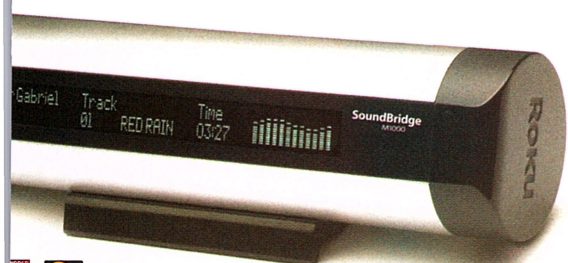
Next, choose an album design from the Theme pull-down menu. If your playlist contains songs from multiple albums, you can use the Mosaic themes to produce a collage of album art. Want to use just one album's art for the cover? Select the playlist song containing that art before choosing Print.

Step 3. Click on Page Setup and adjust the settings for your printer as needed. Click on OK to return to the Print dialog box, and then click on Print.

Step 4. Once it's printed, trim the case insert using the crop marks at the edge of the image as a guide. ✂

Buy the book. This article is an excerpt from *The Macintosh iLife '04* by Jim Heid (2004; reprinted by permission of Pearson Education, Inc., publishing as Peachpit Press).

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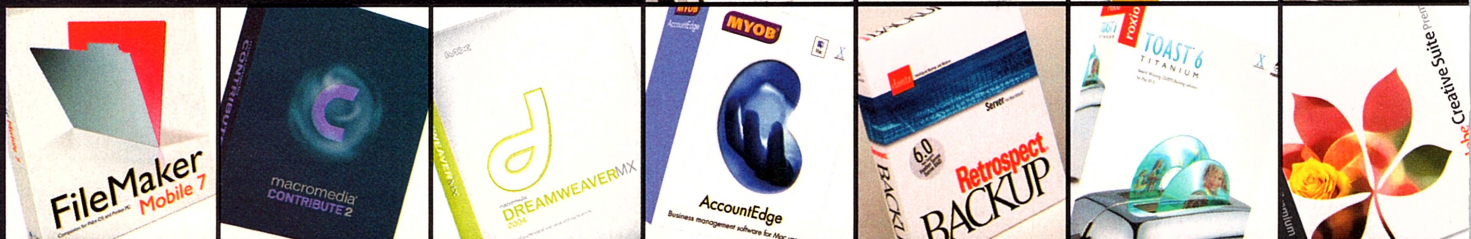
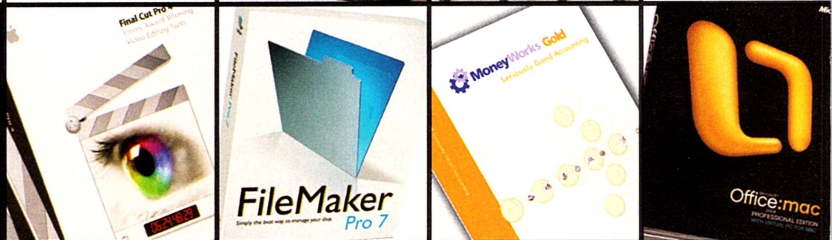
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By James Christopher Murty.

Control iTunes over the web

www.iTunes.PHP

MOST mornings I listen to music via iTunes while I'm getting ready to go to work. Occasionally in the mad rush, I forget to turn it off and, as I use the password function of the screensaver, other members of my household are unable to stop iTunes from playing after I've gone. This month's project provides a simple solution to this problem so that no one resorts pulling the power on my computer while I'm away!

My solution involves interfacing iTunes, a GUI application, with the web via the command line. The method uses AppleScripts to control iTunes with the AppleScripts themselves interfaced with the command line via a utility called `osascript`. `osascript` will be controlled by a server-side scripting language called PHP. I'm using PHP to build the web pages and glue everything together because I'm reasonably comfortable with it but you could just as easily use other web-capable scripting languages like Perl or Python if you prefer them instead.

Modifying Apache's configuration. Before you start coding, there are a couple of housekeeping issues to take care of. PHP is preinstalled on your computer but is not enabled by default. To activate it, you must modify Apache's configuration file which is located at `/etc/httpd/httpd.conf`.

Locate and uncomment the following two lines which are in different locations in the file:

```
#LoadModule php4_module libexec/httpd/libphp4.so
and
#AddModule mod_php4.c
```

by removing the `#` character.

For security reasons, Apache runs as a user called "www" by default – this means that PHP, `osascript`, and the AppleScripts will also run as "www". As iTunes runs using your user account, it's not possible to control iTunes from Apache by default. The only workaround is to run Apache with your user account, which opens a potential security hole – should Apache be compromised by an as yet unpublished vulnerability, an attacker could gain access to whatever files or applications you have privileges to access. Proceed with caution.

So – that said – to make Apache run using your account, locate the line in `httpd.conf` that looks like `User www` and replace `www` with your account's short name. Restart Apache by typing `sudo apachectl restart`



Hot Links

www.php.net
 PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor
www.apple.com/applescript/
www.apple.com/applescript/itunes/
 Scripting iTunes
www.malcolmadams.com/itunes/index.php
 Doug's AppleScripts for iTunes

The AppleScripts. We'll start by covering the easiest part first – pausing iTunes – then we'll build the other control and status AppleScripts and finally the PHP code to tie it all together. If you have a look in iTunes's AppleScript dictionary, you'll see that there is a stop command, but, we'll get more mileage out of the playpause command – which will toggle iTunes's play state on and off – meaning that we won't need to build an additional play command, or have to use any logic to determine which control to display.

Create a folder called iTunes to build your project in. The most logical place to do this is within the folder structure accessible by Apache – in `/Library/Webserver/Documents`

Create a file called `iTunesPause.applescript` with your preferred editor. Fill it with the following:

```
tell application "iTunes"
    playpause
end tell
```

To test this with Script Editor simply press the big green run button. Otherwise, you could try launching this code from the command line using `osascript` by opening up a new terminal window and typing `cd /Library/WebServer/Documents/iTunes/` and then `osascript iTunesPause.applescript`

If iTunes is currently playing it should pause, if iTunes is currently paused, it should play. If iTunes is not currently running it will launch and start playing.

The next easy bits are the other two controls, previous and next track. Create `iTunesPrevious.applescript` and `iTunesNext.applescript` as follows:

```
tell application "iTunes"
    previous track
end tell
and
tell application "iTunes"
    next track
end tell
```

The final bit of AppleScript is a little more complicated. I've chosen to build the text for the status line within the AppleScript. It gets passed back to PHP via `osascript`. I could have chosen to pass back an array or list, building PHP code to construct the text itself, but this method seemed the simplest to demonstrate the technique.

Create a file called `iTunesStatus.applescript` containing the following:

```
tell application "iTunes"
    if player state is playing then
        set iTunesState to "playing "
    else if player state is paused then
        set iTunesState to "paused on "
    else if player state is stopped then
        return "stopped"
    end if
    set iTunesState to iTunesState & name of
current track
    set iTunesState to iTunesState & " by " &
artist of current track
    set iTunesState to iTunesState & " from " &
album of current track
    return iTunesState
end tell
```

This script works by determining iTunes' current state. If it is paused or playing it creates the appropriate string, in a variable called `iTunesState`. If iTunes stopped – the state iTunes would be in if it were initially not running when you ran this code – it simply returns the string "stopped". Next, the information about the track is determined – the name of the current track, the artist and the album – and concatenated in turn to the variable. Finally, it returns the resulting text.

You definitely need to test this script to make sure it is returning a valid result. Launch it with `osascript` with iTunes both paused, playing and quit to confirm this to be the case.

Tying it all together. The final task is to create the PHP code that will generate the html and launch the AppleScripts, gluing everything together.

Create a file called `index.php` and fill it with the following code:

```
<html>
<head>
    <meta http-equiv="Content-Type"
content="text/html; charset=utf-8">
    <meta http-equiv=Refresh Content="30; URL=./">
    <title>iTunes Web Remote</title>
</head>
<body>
<?php
    if ($_GET['pause']) {
        shell_exec('osascript iTunesPause.apple-
script');
    }
    else if ($_GET['previous']) {
        shell_exec('osascript
iTunesPrevious.applescript');
    }
    else if ($_GET['next']) {
        shell_exec('osascript iTunesNext.apple-
script');
    }
}
```

```
$result = shell_exec('osascript
iTunesStatus.applescript');
if ($result) {
    echo $result. "<br>\n";
    echo "<a href='index.php?previous=TRUE'
>previous</a>\n";
    echo "<a href='index.php?pause=TRUE'
>pause</a>\n";
    echo "<a href='index.php?next=TRUE'
>next</a><br>\n";
}
else {
    echo "there was a problem communicating
with iTunes";
}
?>
</body>
</html>
```

The first seven and last two lines are regular html commands. The first meta command lets the web browser know that the contents of the page are encoded using Unicode – supporting non English characters. The second meta command makes the page reload every 30 seconds.

The PHP code is everything between "`<?php`" and "`?>`". In order to explain how it works, let's first focus on the lines starting with "`$result =`". This is the bit that initially launches the `iTunesStatus` AppleScript to find out what iTunes is up to. The result is stored in a variable called `$result`. "`shell_exec`" is the PHP function that allows the running of external programs, in this case the `osascript` command line utility that we are relying on to run our AppleScripts. The if statement checks for errors – it turns out that if the AppleScript can't run, due to your account not being logged in, or Apache being configured to run as "`www`" not as you, `$result` will be empty or "`false`", in which case the code after the else statement will execute. If all is well, the status of iTunes will be displayed followed by links and text for our three controls.

The three links are to this same piece of PHP code, except that they have what are known as get variables at the end of them. This allows us to pass instructions to the PHP code that are at the top – the if, else, else bits we initially skipped over.

The `_GET[]` function (note the use of square brackets) allows us to retrieve those instructions and call the appropriate AppleScripts.

The first time this code is launched there will be no values in the get variables so that part will be skipped over and only iTunes' status will be displayed. If a control is clicked on, the code will be reloaded with the corresponding get variable set to TRUE, the appropriate AppleScript will be launched and then the current status will be displayed.

There are lots of ways to do things like this, and if you were to use this idea seriously as a remote control, you'd probably want to pretty it up with some graphics and a better text display. However using these kinds of techniques can allow you to display the status and control many of the applications on your computer via the web including iChat, iPhoto, Mail and others. ☞

By Sean McNamara.

Classic issue

Help folder

We answer our readers' questions

Each month Channelworx (1300 883 882) gives a copy of Dantz Retrospect Desktop (valued at \$259) to the Australian Macworld reader who submits the most intriguing Help folder query.

Retrospect Desktop is the #1 home and small office backup software for Macintosh. Don't rely on manual drag-and-drop to protect your data — it misses important files, is performed sporadically at best, and cannot restore older or deleted files. Retrospect allows you to easily set up complete, scheduled backups of three networked Macintosh, Windows, or Red Hat Linux desktop and notebook computers. Client licenses are available to protect additional computers. The product CD contains both Retrospect 6.0 for backing up to Mac OS X (10.1.5 though 10.3 "Panther") and Retrospect 5.1 for backing up to Mac OS 9.

Send your query to matthew.powell@niche.com.au for consideration for Help folder. Include your full mailing address to be eligible to win Retrospect Desktop.

All queries and solutions are the sole property of Niche Media.

■ Sean McNamara is a Sydney-based consultant trading as MacAssist.



1

■ I have a G3 iBook running Mac OS X v10.2.6 with Preferences set to start the Classic environment on log-in. When I try to open a Classic document or application, the application opens (often with Error code -1708) with its title in the Menu bar, but no window appears.

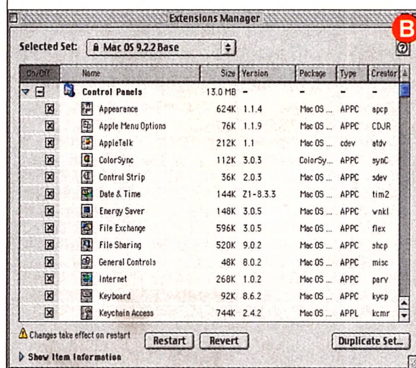
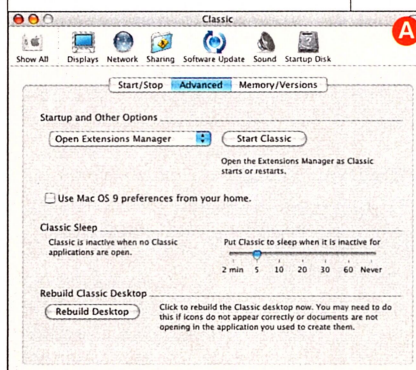
Sometimes I can use the Open... command in the File menu to navigate to my document, sometimes all File menu commands are greyed out. The workaround is that the Classic application Phonebook Plus always opens properly and, once it is the active application, then all the other Classic applications will work normally. I have tried reinstalling Mac OS 9.2.2 from the system CDs without success.

Roger Symons
Beaumaris, Vic.

Unfortunately, Classic troubleshooting vs traditional Mac OS 9 troubleshooting introduces many extra variables which need to be eliminated. Having a machine which can boot into Mac OS 9 actually makes this a little easier, Roger, so I'd get you to startup in Mac OS 9 (using the Startup Disk System Preferences pane) to see if the problem remains. If it remains, you should follow the standard routine of eliminating extensions and preferences files as being potential culprits until you nail the offending file. Given you have re-installed Mac OS 9, it's much less likely to be any of the Apple extensions. I'd also look in the Startup Items folder in Mac OS 9 in case something there is spoiling Mac OS 9.

If the problem disappears, there are several potential problem areas which Mac OS 9 running as Classic can

introduce. First, not all extensions and control panels are compatible with Classic mode. We can start to see if this is the problem by opening the Classic System Preferences pane, clicking on Advanced, and choosing "Open Extensions Manager" from the popup menu towards the top of that window **A**. Then click the "Start Classic" button (or "Restart Classic" if Classic's currently running) and the Classic startup window will display the Extensions Manager. Select "Mac OS 9.2.2 Base" from the Selected Set popup menu **B**, then click the Continue button, and see if that clears the problem up — if it



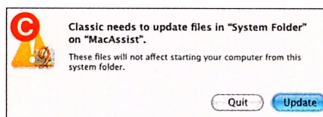
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Modem/dial tone oddities

Cursor oddity

2



does, you're at the stage of testing extensions, control panels and startup items again).

If the problem remains, it may be one of the special Classic support files which has been installed in the Mac OS 9 System Folder which may have become corrupt — you can delete the "Classic", "Classic Support" and "Classic Support UI" files in the System Folder (not the folder simply called "System", but the folder called "System Folder"). When you restart Classic, Mac OS X will prompt you that files need to be installed **C** — click the Update button and see if Classic starts up properly.

If the problem still remains, we're left with two possibilities — a User-level file or preference file in Mac OS X is spoiling things, or a System-level file is preventing Classic from working properly. It's much more likely to be a System-level file at this point — before considering doing a reinstall of Mac OS X, update to Mac OS X v10.2.8 (which will update Mac OS X as well as its Classic support files) or Mac OS X v10.3 to see if the problem clears up.

If the problem persists, we're at the point of doing a reinstall of Mac OS X utilising the "Archive & Install" option with the "Preserve Users and Network Settings" sub-option — these options are available when selecting your hard drive during the installation process. With the hard drive selected, click on the Options button, then select the middle option (the Archive & Install one), then tick the checkbox for preserving Users and Network Settings. This will give you all new System files, while keeping your preferences and users intact.

■ I have an interesting but annoying problem with the internet. I own a G4 500Mhz with two internal HDs formatted with Mac OS X v10.3.5 on one and the other divided into two partitions running Mac OS 9.2.2 and Mac OS X v10.2.8. All was well and functioning normally until last week when I was unable to connect to the internet due to, as I found out later, a problem with the phone lines.

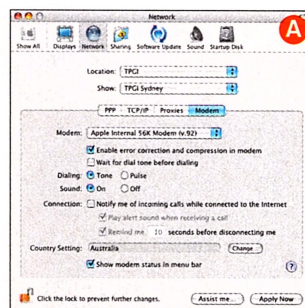
The next day I tried to connect and there was no dial tone from either Panther or Jaguar and I couldn't connect. I tried 9.2.2 and it had a dial tone and connected without any problem, hence I know there isn't a problem with hardware. I also have a iBook G3 laptop running 10.2.8 and 9.2.2. I tried it on the same line and 9.2.2 was fine but there was no dial tone in 10.2.8 although it did connect and work.

I have checked with my ISP and taken the laptop to them and it did exactly the same thing — works in 10.2.8, even though it has no dial tone so I know it isn't the phone line.

On Internet Connect I get the message "a modem error occurred. Please verify your settings and try again" or on the Network "Internal Modem is configured but is not connected. Internal modem is set up to dial (the phone number it gives is the correct one)". I had Telstra check my lines (and I have tried both fax and phone lines which are separate) and there was a problem with the fax line which the service man said he fixed but it has made no difference

*Lynne,
Orange, NSW*

This is quite mysterious, Lynne — we may or may not be able to find where the differences are,



but let's start looking, anyway.

Firstly, go to the Network System Preferences pane in Mac OS X v10.2.8 and v10.3.5 (in 10.3.5 double click on the info on Internal Modem), then click on the Modem tab of that window **A**.

Make sure the Modem selected in the popup menu is the correct one: Apple Internal 56K Modem (v.90) or (v.92) — v.90 should always be a safe bet. Next, make sure the Dialing option is set to Tone and Sound is set to On. Finally, check the Country Setting — each country potentially has different dial tones, and this may be where the dial tone is being missed. If the country isn't set to Australia, click on the Change... button, and then click on Sydney on the Australian map (or select it from the popup menu after clicking in the time zone for the eastern states of Australia).

If that still doesn't fix the problem, you may just need to deselect the "Wait for dial tone before dialing" option back in the Modem tab of the Network System Preferences and do without hearing the dial tone. If that is the case, I suspect something at the exchange has changed, as your machine hasn't and Mac OS 9 is still happy to "hear" the dial tone. If deselecting that option doesn't fix it, you may want to consider a Mac OS X re-install using the Archive & Install instructions in this month's answer about Classic not starting properly.

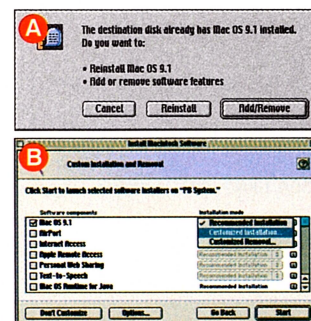
■ I have a very minor and annoying hiccup with my Mac's display pointer. There is a ghost double two-centimetre vertical line moving with the pointer — and lying about 5mm to the right of it — all the time. What is it, and how might it disappear?

*Peter Mumme
via internet*

Sounds like we're having some very weird problems this month — what you describe, Peter, is a little hard to visualise but, given the fact cursors, are stored in System-level files, I'm going to suggest you join some of the other correspondents this month and consider a Mac OS reinstall.

If you're in Mac OS X v10.2 or later, follow the instructions in "Classic not starting". If you're in Mac OS 9, you can run the installer and then when it says that Mac OS 9 is already installed, choose the Add/Remove option **A** and then just select Mac OS 9.x from the top of the list then presented **B**.

There is a slim chance this is a hardware fault, but given the display oddity is following the cursor, it's much more likely to be software-related.



Address Book oddity

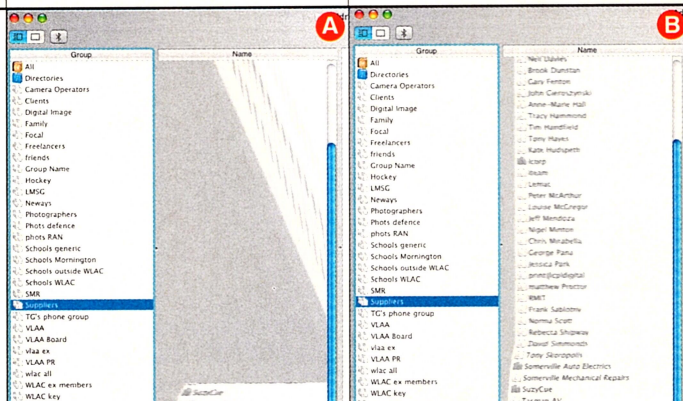
4

■ I took delivery of my new G5 with Panther a short while ago and am loving it. Today though I opened my Address Book and scrolled through the names to be confronted with display oddities **A** and **B**. A very nice interactive effect but a little disconcerting.

Tony Gay
St Kilda, VIC

Wow, disconcerting to say the least, Tony.

First thing I would try is to delete the com.apple.AddressBook.plist file which is in the Preferences folder in the Library folder in your Home folder (or just



drag it to the Desktop so you can put it back if it's not the problem).

If the problem persists, create a new user in the Accounts System Preferences pane, log in as that user (by choosing the Logout Tony Gay option in the Apple menu, then entering in the newly created details) and do some testing of the Address Book to see if the problem occurs again.

If it does, it's a problem with the Address Book application, or, less likely, with some System files. If you have another

machine with the same version of Mac OS X, copy its Address Book application onto your machine — you could also install Mac OS X onto an external HD, update it to the same version as on the main HD, then copy the Address Book application that way.

If that still doesn't fix it, you may have to join Lynne and Roger in this month's "reinstall-Mac-OS-X-using-the-Archive-&-Install-option" club we seem to be forming rather rapidly.

Slipped discs

Microsoft Reader tip

Last month we ran a tip about getting DVD-RW discs to work in a particular model of SuperDrive.

Because the tip involved asking for help from a Windows user, I offered a special prize to the first reader who wrote in offering a solution to the problem that didn't involve dalliance with the Dark Side.

It turns out that media made by Sony and TDK work fine in the UJ-825 drive the reader was having problems with. Other branded media don't work reliably or, in some cases, at all.

The anonymous reader who sent in that tip receives, for his trouble, a copy of Microsoft Virtual PC with Windows XP Pro valued at \$499. See? I told you it would be good.

Speaker oddity

5

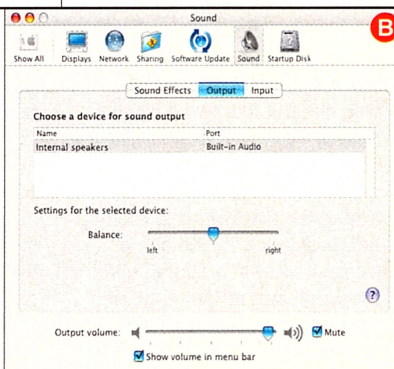
■ I have a problem with my speaker balance. I have Harmon Kardon SoundSticks and about five weeks ago I lost the balance slide in the System Preferences, Sound section **A**. When the sound is low, I can hear it from both speakers but as I turn it up, it goes to the right side only. I don't know if it's software or

hardware. I don't want to do a re-install if I can get away with it.

I am currently running version 10.3.4 and when I did the last update I thought it might fix the problem but alas, no. I have only had the Mac for about four months so I'm still new at it. I have asked a couple of Mac savvy people and also at the local Apple shop but they have not heard of this particular problem.

Martin Koopmans
via internet

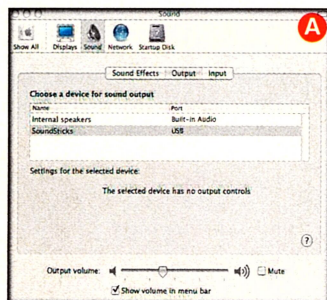
Your local Mac shop sounds like they're friendly people, Martin, so I'd suggest taking your SoundSticks to them, hooking them into a machine with Mac OS X v10.3, and seeing if they get the balance controls — if they don't, the speakers themselves may be incorrectly reporting that they're mono, rather than stereo — if the left speaker has died for some reason, this may point to the



problem. This is another reason to try your speakers on another Mac — it's the only way you'll know whether the problem is with your Mac or your speakers. You could also try different USB ports on your Mac in case it's at that hardware level on your Mac.

If the balance controls appear on another Mac, I'd suggest you join the rest of this month's correspondents and consider a Mac OS X Archive & Install reinstall. This would especially be the case if the Internal speakers also have lost their balance controls **B**. While I understand your hesitation on reinstalling, it may be your only way forward.

Each month, Microsoft gives a free Notebook Optical Mouse valued at \$70 to the Australian Macworld reader who submits the best tip. Sized for mobility and designed to be noticed, Microsoft Notebook Optical Mouse offers great comfort for either hand and is always good to go. E-mail your tip, together with your name, address and phone number, to matthew.powell@niche.com.au. All reader tips published become the sole property of Niche Media.





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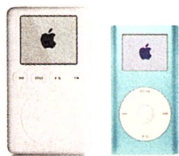
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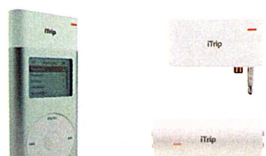
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Tools for the pro

ALL them Apple addicts if you like, but many people find that the Apple iLife suite leaves them wanting to do even more with their Macs. Move over iMovie, I want Final Cut; iDVD, beam me up to DVD Studio Pro — but what comes after GarageBand? One answer is ProTools. The choice of many professional musicians and sound engineers, ProTools is complex, powerful and definitely in need of a book or two.

The Musician's Guide To Protools was written by veteran producer, engineer and musician John Keane from the realisation that his musician friends were being overwhelmed by the complexity of the software. His approach to this problem was to focus only on the parts of the program they would need to record, edit and mix their own demos.

To begin, you'll need to have a version of ProTools (LE or TDM) installed on your computer to run the session files on the accompanying CD, and also to have read the Getting Started section of the ProTools documentation. If you already know a bit about getting sound into your Mac that will help.

The first of three parts — Making A Home Demo — is a basic introduction to the ProTools interface. By starting a new session from scratch, laying down a rhythm track, adding a lead track and mixing down you'll be well prepared for the next two sessions.

Part two — The Doormats Session — supposes that you've been left some tracks from a late night session by a fictitious pub band The Doormats. They've headed off on the road and your job is to clean up the session material ready for overdubs when they return.

First problem: the drummer got excited and came in too early as well as wandering around the beat at times. Fixed. Then the bass player also had timing problems and even missed a cue, leaving a gap in the track. Fixed. False dynamics and clangers? Fixed. Finger squeaks on the acoustic guitar? Removed.

Part three — The Honeywagon Session — simulates a demo session for a loop-based version of a traditional hymn by another make-believe band. First you have to tidy up the loops and beef up the drums. Then you'll learn how to provide a cue mix for the four members of Honeywagon before recording and "comping" (compiling) the vocal tracks. That done, there's some pretty advanced mixing and smoothing techniques before the creation of the final stereo master.

Because the ProTools window can get pretty cluttered as the tracks mount up, Keane provides an appendix with tips on optimal monitor resolution. Other appendixes contain keyboard shortcuts, troubleshooting information, hard drive formatting and speeding up your



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Mac. The journey is illuminated by crisp screen shots and a light sprinkling of muso jargon. As an ex-muso the scenario-based approach worked really well for me. That's not to say the book couldn't be used by sound engineers or home recordists. Essential info from a qualified source.

The ProTools Bible by David Leathers works on the similar assumption that you have ProTools installed and set up properly but also that you have some experience with recording and mixing audio. As the book comes without a CD you will need to provide your own music tracks. The first section contains tutorials which are designed for "beginning ProTools users as well as for users who have some experience and want to explore the system further". These tutorials introduce you to key parts of the interface and common processes that provide a solid grounding in fundamental ProTools concepts.

So, set up a session, record some tracks, and use the edit tools to get them sounding just right. Next set up the cue mix, record the solo and then learn track comping using the punch-in technique. Finally mix down and bounce to disk. And that's it — your ProTools probationary driver's license. But you'll need to do a lot of practice on your own.

The second and largest section of the book, titled The Extended Software Environment, covers a large number of the most common plug-ins designed to extend and enhance ProTools' capabilities. These are divided into five sections — dynamics and levels, special effects, audio enhancers, virtual instruments and a miscellaneous section. Each plug-in comes with a somewhat murky screen shot and a short general description. This is not so much a how-to section as a list of what's out there. Some of these plug-ins have so many features that you'd need a book to cover each.

The final and very brief section of the book details hardware issues. First the four levels of ProTools systems currently available — ProTools Free, ProTools LE, ProTools TDM and ProTools TDM II — and the hardware requirements of each. Then hard drive, networking, monitor, and MIDI considerations are briefly discussed.

The ProTools Bible doesn't really cut it as a hands-on introduction to the software. It is little more than an introductory primer. Its main virtue is its detailed list of plug ins, something that the Musician's Guide only briefly touches on. In this way the two books complement each other. If you're cashed up or spending someone else's money, why not get both?

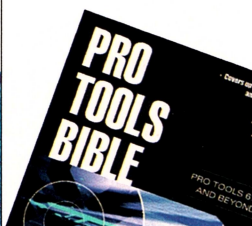
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Keith has been a Mac addict since 1984 and still can't fathom why there is anyone who isn't.

Title **The Musician's Guide To ProTools**
Author **John Keane**
Publisher **Osborne**
ISBN **00722331750**
RRP **\$69.95**



Title **The ProTools Bible**
Author **David Leathers**
Publisher **Osborne**
ISBN **0071412344**
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AMW Labs: DVD burners

Dual layer still in its infancy

DUAL layer, or double layer, DVD burners have just started to hit the streets, which means that our roundup of external burners was only able to look at five of these next generation drives. Several vendors were just about to release their dual layer burners as deadline approached, so this review is somewhat of a work in progress.

The good news is that the latest batch of burners all seem to handle every format you've ever heard of, which means you no longer have to worry about whether +R is better or worse than -R. Your new burner will handle both formats in write-once and re-writable modes.

The bad news is that the whole double layer initiative isn't quite ready for prime time. With a promise of 8.5GB of storage versus the 4.7GB on single layer discs, or 120 minutes of high definition video, what's not to like about the new format? Price and availability of the media for starters. Blank DVD +R DL discs, also known as DVD +R9, retail for \$13.95 and you can only get Verbatim brand discs at the moment. Nothing wrong with Verbatim, but it will be a while before there are more choices and therefore cheaper prices.

AMW Labs found supplies hard to locate, with only Dick Smith stores having stock on the shelves and most other outlets "waiting".

Contrast this with supplies of single layer DVD blanks, which can be snapped up at retail shops like Big W for around a dollar each in a stack of 25. You would need a good reason to put your data onto a dual-layer disk when you could store the same information on two standard DVDs and have ten dollars change.

Should you decide to go ahead and use the DL blanks, good luck reading the data once you've written it. The Finder doesn't recognise a data disc burned with Toast Lite v6 (the software bundled with most drives), although Toast Lite is happy to burn and verify the disc for you. We were unable to test Toast Platinum before deadline, which we have been assured will handle burning the DL discs in the UDF format that can be understood by the Finder.

Despite the frustration of not being able to use these drives at their maximum capacity, you'd be crazy not to buy a dual layer capable unit if you are in the market for an external DVD writer. The media is only going to get cheaper and the necessary software support won't be far behind the falling prices. Until the blanks get cheaper, you'll enjoy burning regular DVDs at speeds as fast as 16x depending on the model you choose.

Outstanding



Very good



Good



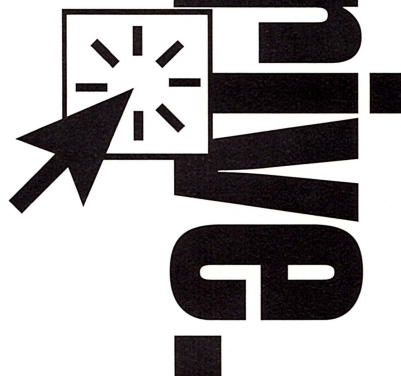
Flawed



Unacceptable



Dangerous



We evaluate, rigorously test and give detailed assessments of new-release software and hardware.



LG GSA 5120D



Sony DRX700UL

	LG GSA 5120D	LaCie 16× FireWire DVD±RW Double Layer	LaCie 8× FireWire Slim DVD±RW Double Layer
■ Type	Dual-layer DVD Burner		
■ Rating	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★½
■ Pros	Vertical orientation, dual ports, 12× speed, price	Ships with Toast Lite, 16× speed	Ships with Toast Lite, small and portable
■ Cons	No Macintosh software included	No USB 2.0	No USB 2.0
■ Ports	Firewire, USB 2.0	FireWire	FireWire
■ RRP	\$349	\$399	\$499
■ Manufacturer	LG Electronics	LaCie	LaCie
■ Distributor	LG Electronics Australia 1800 725 375	LaCie Australia 02 9669 6900	LaCie Australia 02 9669 6900
■ Reviewer	Ian Yates		
■ Hot links	www.lge.com.au	www.lacie.com.au	www.lacie.com.au

The contenders. AMW Labs looked at six units – one each from Formac, Iomega, LG, Sony and two from LaCie. All but the Formac support double layer discs, albeit with the caveats above. Formac should be shipping its DL version by the time you are reading this, with Sony and Imation hot on its heels with new models. Neither the LG or the Sony ship with specific Macintosh software, but they both worked fine on the test-bed G4 desktop.

The Iomega unit supports only USB 2.0, while the other drives all support FireWire. AMW Labs added a 4-port USB 2.0 PCI card to the test-bed G4, at a cost of \$45, requiring no drivers, and the Iomega drive was then able to join the others and happily read, write and copy DVDs. The Sony and LG drives support both FireWire and USB 2.0, which could appeal to readers who also have Windows PCs. The reviewed LaCie and Formac drives are FireWire only, but there are also USB 2.0-only versions of both LaCie drives available.

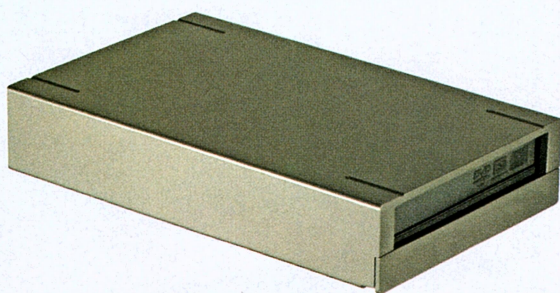
The greyhound of this bunch is the larger of the two LaCie drives, which can burn DVDs at 16× and can also burn DL DVDs at 4×. That ability will only be useful in the future; the currently available Verbatim blanks can only accept 2.4× burn rates. However, since a full 8.5GB takes about an hour to burn, being

able to do it in half the time when the next crop of blanks comes on the market is appealing. Let's hope they are also half the price of the current blank DLs.

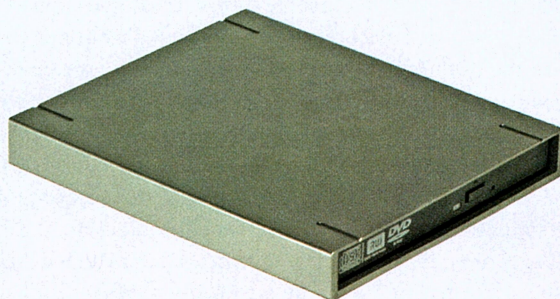
Next in the speed stakes are the LG and the Iomega with a 12× maximum burn rate for DVD +R and 8× for DVD -R. The Sony, the Formac and the slim LaCie can manage a respectable 8× on both DVD write-once formats. All the drives fall back to 4× maximum for DVD +RW and DVD -RW.

Each of these drives can also be used to burn CD-R and CD-RW blanks, with the Sony, Iomega and LG doing it at 40× and 24×, while the large LaCie unit is a tad slower at 32× and 24×. The slim LaCie and the Formac burn CD-R at 24× and CD-RW at 16×. All the drives performed to their claimed specifications in AMW Lab testing, but you won't get top speed unless you pay for media with a higher speed rating.

Pick a winner. The Formac comes in a snow white case which matches your AirPort base station, your iPod and other Apple toys, so if you want to stay fashion coordinated, you might want to hang out for the new model. If you can live with a drive that doesn't quite



LaCie 16× FireWire DVD±RW Double Layer



LaCie 8× FireWire Slim DVD±RW Double Layer

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True plug and play for Mac or PC

The ultimate desk accessory of 2004.

G2
ICECUBE
GENERATION 2

DRX700UL	Iomega SuperDVD	Devideon 8424
		Single-layer DVD burner
⦿⦿⦿	⦿⦿⦿ 1/2	⦿⦿⦿
Vertical orientation, dual ports	Ships with Mac software, 12× speed	Coordinates with other snow-white kit
No Macintosh software included	No FireWire, price	About to be superseded, not dual-layer
FireWire, USB 2.0	USB 2.0, RCA stereo	FireWire
\$399	\$499	\$479
Sony	Iomega	Formac
Sony Australia (02) 9878 9712	Iomega Australia 02 8223 9140	Powermove Distribution 03 9499 2744
www.sony.com.au	www.iomega.com.au	www.powermove.com.au


match your shoes, the LaCie units were designed by F. A. Porsche, so they should have some street-cred with the catwalk set. The LG is a mixture of white and silver, the Sony is G4-grey and silver, and the Iomega is a dull charcoal affair with a swathe of dull silver highlights.

The LG, Sony and Formac drives have provision for vertical orientation, which can be an advantage if space is tight. However the Sony has its eject button on the side so it can realistically only be mounted on the right hand side of your screen. The larger of the LaCie drives can be mounted on its side, even though it has no special feet for the purpose, but the Iomega has curved sides and won't stay put in the vertical configuration.

The slim LaCie doesn't win any prizes for speed, but if you want portable, this drive is a clear winner. Although it has a separate power pack, it can take all the power it needs from the FireWire port, so you need take nothing but the drive and a cable to hit the road with this unit. It definitely looks right at home sitting alongside a PowerBook, and is about the cheapest option to add DVD burning to older model laptops, while maintaining portability.

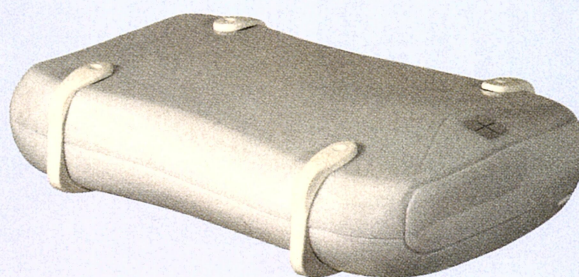
If speed, colour and portability haven't made up your mind for you, then you must be waiting to see which one you can best

afford. Forget the Formac at \$479, because the new dual layer model will probably ship for around the same price or lower, some time this month. The Iomega seems to be out of touch with current pricing for 12× drives at \$499. If you like the Iomega brand, wait a few weeks for that company's 16× drive, which will have a lower \$449 price tag. The Sony and the speedy full-size LaCie are both available for the competitive price of \$399. The slim LaCie is more expensive than its larger sibling at \$499, but if you want portable, you have to pay a bit extra. That leaves the LG at a bargain basement price of \$349 as the clear winner in the cost category. Of course, these are suggested retail prices and you may well be able to suggest a better price from your retailer on the model that takes your fancy.

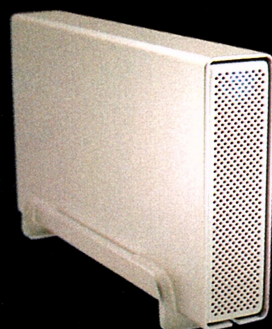
Australian Macworld's buying advice. The best value drive is either of the LaCie units. For only \$50 more than the price-leading LG drive, the full-size LaCie gives you a 16× burn-rate and a ready-for-the-future 4× DVD +R DL burning speed. And if you want truly portable, the slim LaCie is the only game in town, for an extra \$100 premium over its desk-based sibling. 



Iomega SuperDVD



Devideon 8424



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■ Type	CAD program
■ Rating	↑↑↑↑ 1/2
■ Pros	Beautiful graphics; easy and fun to use; offers complete set of tools
■ Cons	Limited page size; no layers; no pro-level import and export for industry-standard file formats
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$US116
■ Publisher	Microspot
■ Distributor	Available online
■ Reviewer	Greg Miller
■ Hot links	www.microspot.co.uk

MacDraft PE 5.5

Pro app reaches out to consumers

MACDRAFT PE (Personal Edition) 5.5 is a slightly scaled-down version of Microspot's well-known MacDraft, a 2D CAD (computer-aided design) application for creating floor plans, architectural and landscape drawings, technical illustrations, and flowcharts. This version is aimed at the home, small-business, and education markets.

MacDraft PE includes nearly all the features of its more powerful sibling, such as drafting tools for lines, fills, dimensions, and more. With a conceptual lineage that goes back to the original MacPaint and MacDraw, MacDraft has a familiar Mac interface that is very easy to learn and fun to use.

Attributes such as line weights, line styles, fill patterns, and line and fill colours can be easily viewed and changed via the Attributes and Resize palettes. You can also set an overall scale (choosing from 25 standard scales) and use European or American units of measurement.

MacDraft PE also lets you create and edit your own fill patterns, as large as 32 by 32 pixels; this facilitates more-complex and more-detailed designs.

This version has limits. The maximum physical page size is only 17 by 17 inches (though that doesn't limit the size of your drawings). The consumer version also doesn't support layers, which professionals need so they can show and hide different parts of complex drawings.


Better-looking drawings. Quartz Graphics – the name refers to the high-quality native graphics engine in OS X – is a new feature for MacDraft

PE, and it's unusual even in more-expensive CAD programs. It provides higher-quality on-screen graphics, resulting in better differentiation between various line weights, for example. In addition, this version has a transparency feature for lines, fills, and other objects, and you can control the level of transparency – from 0 to 100 percent. This makes it possible for multiple overlapping objects to be visible at the same time. Another new feature is ATSUI (Apple Type Services for Unicode Imaging) text. This makes text look terrific on screen no matter what its rotation is.

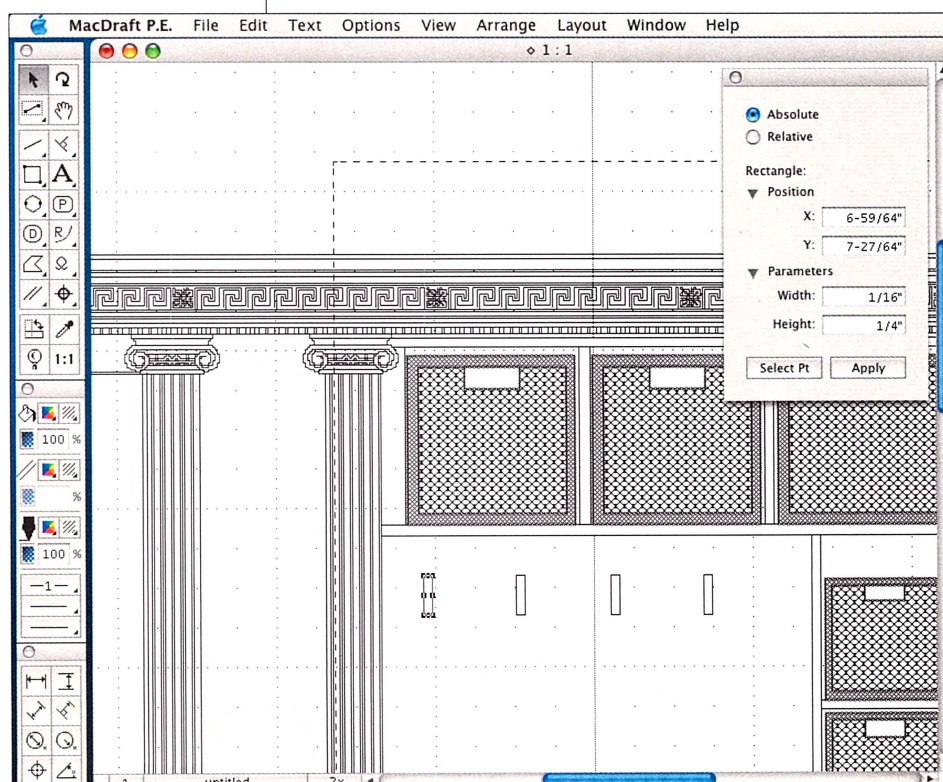
MacDraft PE now lets you undo your last 100 actions – an essential feature when you're working on a complex technical drawing.

Graphics import and export. Version 5.5 lets you import graphics file formats such as PICT, TIFF, GIF, JPEG, BMP, Photoshop, and PDF. Imported images can be rotated and scaled and can have various levels of transparency applied to them. Drawings can be exported in formats such as PICT, TIFF, JPEG, Photoshop, and PDF. However, you can't import or export the architectural and engineering industry-standard formats DWG and DXF. To work with these formats, you need the professional version of MacDraft.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. MacDraft PE 5.5 is a complete drafting tool for anyone who creates architectural drawings, technical illustrations, and landscape designs. If you're a professional, you should be aware of the product's limitations: no DWG or DXF import or export, no layers, and limited page size.

If you don't need any of these advanced features, you'll find that MacDraft PE is both extremely capable and incredibly easy to use. 

Mac look-and-feel. MacDraft PE 5.5 has a familiar user interface that makes the program easy to learn.



	EyeTV 200	EyeHome
■ Type	Digital video recorder	Multimedia set-top box
■ Rating	↑↑↑↑ 1/2	↑↑↑↑
■ Pros	Improved picture quality, improved speed, improved compatibility with iMovie and iDVD	Wide range of supported media formats; compatible with iTunes playlists and iPhoto libraries and slideshows
■ Cons	Still no electronic program guide in Australia	None significant
■ OS X	Only	Only
■ RRP	\$799	\$550
■ Manufacturer	El Gato	
■ Distributor	Memory Solutions 03 9645 3806	
■ Reviewer	Matthew JC. Powell	
■ Hot links	www.memsol.com.au	

EyeTV 200 and EyeHome

Getting better all the time

IT'S been about a year since I reviewed El Gato's original EyeTV, a device that allowed you to watch TV on your Mac and record it in MPEG-1 format. At the time I offered a wish-list for future developments: a FireWire version that could save video in higher quality; compatibility with iMovie rather than the crude editor El Gato supplied; an electronic program guide like that enjoyed by US and European customers.

The EyeTV 200, announced in January, answered the first of those wishes by switching to FireWire rather than USB for its connection, which in turn enabled it to employ MPEG-2 video. The improvement in picture quality over the original EyeTV is immediately noticeable. Where recordings from the EyeTV (still marketed as EyeTV 100) looked a little worse than VHS, recordings from EyeTV 200 look almost DVD-like. Remembering that these are recordings of broadcast TV signals, that's high praise.

However, you still had to use third-party software gleaned from the web if you wanted to edit programs you recorded using iMovie.

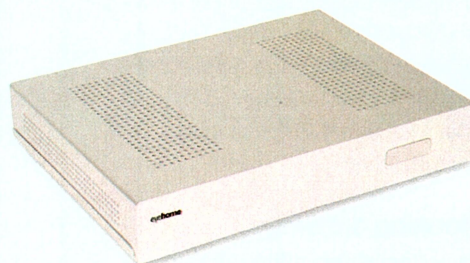
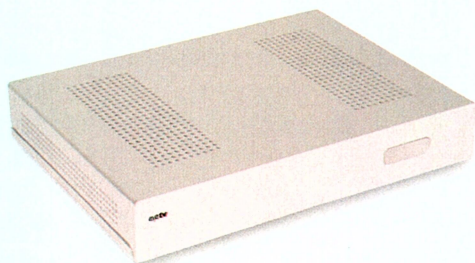
A software update last month (indeed the reason this review didn't appear last issue) answers that criticism. Now it's a simple matter of exporting the files you've recorded and the relatively

complicated task of de-multiplexing the MPEG-2 files into DV that iMovie can handle is taken care of simply. You can also export to iDVD, though the preferred DVD path remains Roxio's Toast 7.

Given how fantastic EyeTV has become, it almost seems churlish to complain about its one shortcoming: there is still no online program guide, requiring users to set up future recordings using a VCR-style menu system. It's a good menu system, but compared to drag-and-dropping from a searchable web site it leaves something to be desired. I'd give EyeTV 200 five mice if it weren't for that one failing.

EyeHome. Of course, the other small failing of the EyeTV is that you're watching TV on your Mac rather than a TV screen. Let's not forget that long before the Mac became the hub of your multimedia lifestyle, that position belonged to a large piece of furniture in the corner of the lounge room.

Even a pretty big computer screen makes for a poky viewing area if you're used to the home cinema experience. Unless you own one of Apple's 30-inch Cinema HD behemoths you're unlikely to want to watch that much TV on your Mac.





Enter EyeHome. EyeHome is a set-top box that you connect to your Mac and to your TV over a home network (it even works wirelessly over AirPort). It allows you to play back not only TV shows but also music and photographs stored on your Mac. Not only does it play back files recorded from EyeTV, but the recent software updates have expanded that capability to all flavours of MPEG and DivX, a popular format for movies downloaded from the internet.

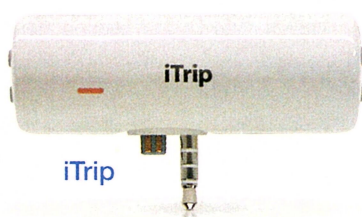
In addition to movies, EyeHome can view pictures from your iPhoto library, and is fully compatible with iPhoto's playlists and slideshows – if you've assigned music to a photo library, EyeHome plays it. Likewise EyeHome allows full access to your iTunes library and all iTunes functions via its own on-screen menu. If you've got your TV hooked up to your home stereo this can be quite an effective way of choosing the music for a party; rather than going back and forth to your Mac, just use the EyeHome remote from anywhere in the room. Unfortunately I couldn't get iTunes visualisations to play on the TV, so while songs are playing your guests are stuck looking at the on-screen menu.

As an added bonus, EyeHome allows you to surf the web using Safari on your TV. I have to admit I'm not sure why anyone would do this, and I didn't find the experience particularly enriching, but it's good to know it's there.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. I have to admit to being something of an EyeTV fan. As I spend an awful lot of time in front of my computer, being able to have TV shows going in a window while I work, and being able to fast-forward through ads or replay key moments during the broadcast, is a boon. If that doesn't appeal to you then EyeTV 200 probably won't either.

If you're a heavy TV viewer and hate to miss something just because you're stuck at your Mac, the EyeTV 200 is somewhere near perfect. The addition of EyeHome, which brings the digital lifestyle back to its accustomed place on the TV set, is an enhancement to EyeTV, your Mac and your TV all at once. ☞

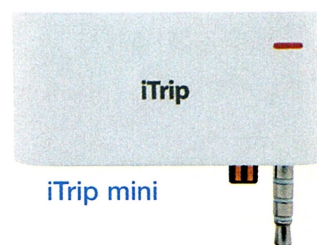
MemSol... iPod extras



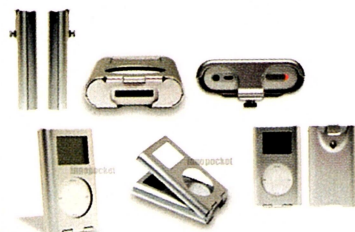
iTrip



iTalk



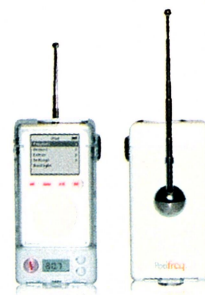
iTrip mini



iPod mini metal case



iPod car charger



podfreq

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■ Type	Information management utility
■ Rating	★★★★½
■ Pros	Extensive annotation and indexing features; powerful searching; refined, customisable interface
■ Cons	No viewer for sharing Notebooks; limited export options; weak security
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$US50
■ Publisher	Circus Ponies
■ Distributor	Available online
■ Reviewer	Robert Ellis
■ Hot links	www.circusponies.com

NoteBook 1.2

Virtual spiral notebook

THERE are many applications designed to help you cope with a flood of information, from simple notepads to sophisticated personal information managers. Most are either too lightweight to keep up or so complex that they make the task even more overwhelming.

Circus Ponies' NoteBook 1.2, like its competitor AquaMinds' NoteTaker, uses a spiral-notebook metaphor for capturing your notes and outlines, so it's intuitive and easy to use. NoteBook's features – unlimited annotation, automatic (and extensive) indexing, and a Super-Find function – make it an outstanding information manager.

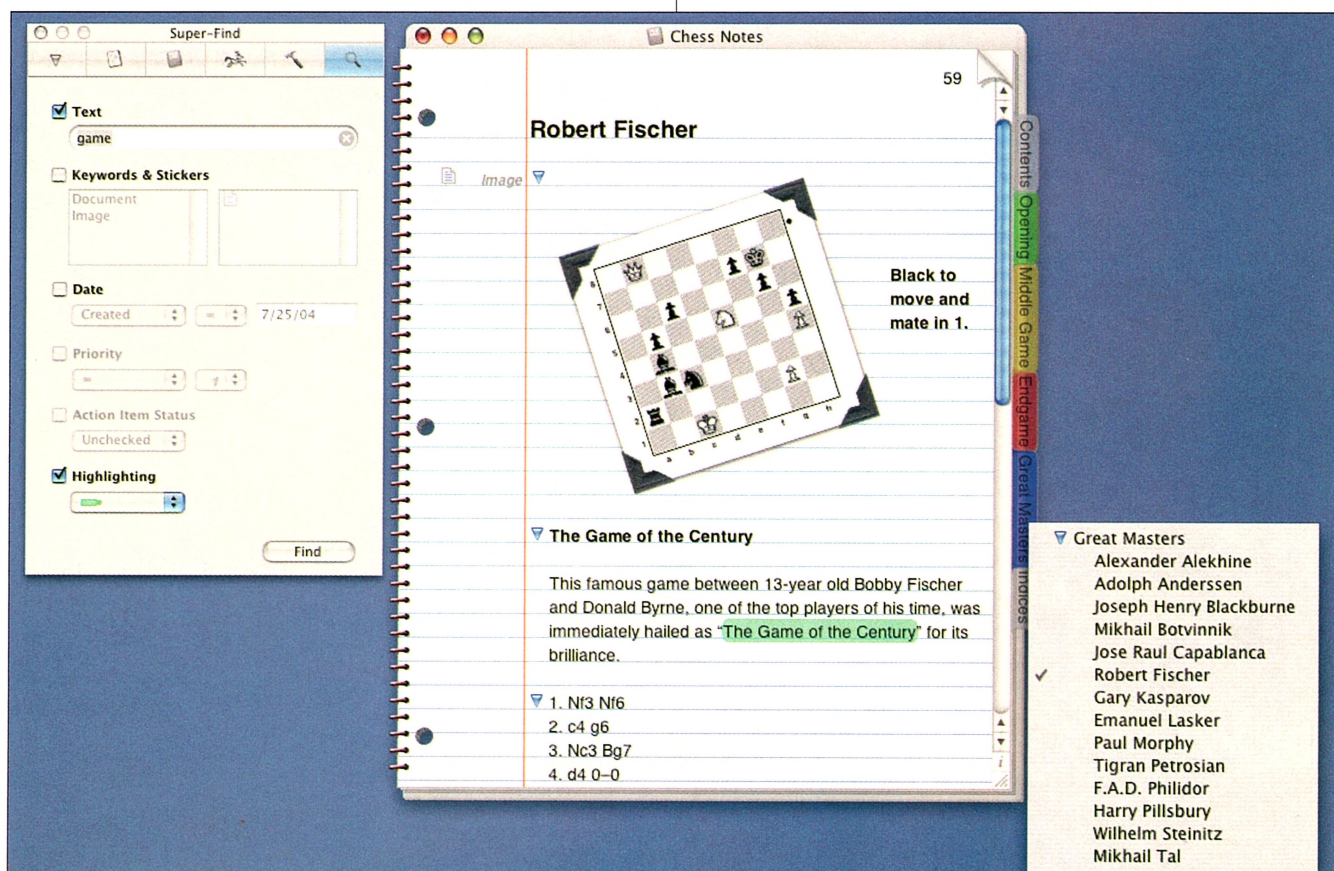
Flexible outliner. A NoteBook document (called a Notebook) can contain any number of pages divided by tabs into sections. You create as many sections and subsections as you like. As you enter notes, NoteBook arranges them into a hierarchical outline of individual cells containing attributes such as a due date, an action-item check box, a priority level, or highlighting. NoteBook automatically records some attributes, such as the creation date. While NoteTaker limits annotations to one category for each entry, NoteBook lets you annotate entries with as many keywords and Stickers (icons) as you like.

A Clipping Services feature makes it easy to harvest information from other applications. Add a Clipping Service to one or more pages in a Notebook, and the pages appear in the Services and contextual menus throughout OS X. A Clip And Annotate item is also added to the contextual menu. Selecting it opens a dialog sheet where you can give the clipping a title, edit its content, or convert it to plain text.

NoteBook isn't just for text notes. You can add clippings, images, web links, movies, audio, documents, and folders to a cell. NoteBook can record voice annotations and import files directly from a digital camera. Using OS X's Inkwell feature, you can write or sketch just as you would in a paper notebook.

Super-find. It's easy to find your way around NoteBook. Control-clicking on any tab brings up a shortcut menu to all the pages in that section. NoteBook automatically creates an index of all cell attributes and adds it to the back of your Notebook.

Take note. NoteBook has powerful search capabilities through Super-Find (top right). Tabbed menus make navigation easy.



There's even a Discarded Attachments Index, a kind of Trash for your Notebook (your file can grow to an unwieldy size if you don't empty this periodically). The index makes finding things a snap, but it can also append a ream of extra pages, so select only the pages you really want when you print.

In case the index isn't enough, NoteBook also has a Super-Find feature, which lets you search for combinations of attributes. For example, you can find all of a keyword's entries that are highlighted in purple, or only the high-priority action items with empty check boxes. Super-Find is impressive, but it overlooks items on the Contents and Divider pages (Circus Ponies says it will address this in the next major release).

Keeping up appearances. What fun is a notebook if you can't personalise it? NoteBook is completely customisable. Hide the spiral, hole punches, or page curl. Add a metallic appearance. Change the cover image, page background, or highlighter colours. Resize divider tabs, assign colours or images to them, or adjust their transparency. Assign styles to different levels in the outline. Multimedia items can have a Media Frame, which allows you to add borders, drop shadows, and photo corners, as well as scale and rotate images.

Sharing notes. You can share Notebooks, or parts of Notebooks, with other NoteBook users. Just save individual pages or sections as a Page Bundle, a special kind of NoteBook file. You can open a Page Bundle as a new Notebook or drop it into an existing one.

There's no viewer application for sharing Notebooks with people who don't have NoteBook. However, you can export your Notebooks to HTML with a few clicks. An exported web page looks and functions much like a Notebook, and you can turn off the spiral, hole punches, page curl, and tabs if you want a less notebook-like appearance. NoteBook won't export index pages to HTML; that's fine for a small site, but not for a larger one, where an index (or even better, something like Super-Find) would aid navigation.

NoteBook can also export pages to text, RTF, and OPML (Outline Processor Markup Language, a standard outline format). Unfortunately, it can export only one page at a time.

You can also share your Notebooks by printing them. NoteBook adds an entry to the Print dialog box, where you can adjust settings and turn off the spiral, for example (oddly, you can't opt to print the cover).

You can also password-protect your Notebook to secure it from prying eyes, but this stops snoops only from opening it in NoteBook. A Notebook document is actually a bundle (a folder containing multiple program resources), and password protection won't prevent people from peeking inside. You can encrypt individual pages, but this secures only the text, not embedded files.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. NoteBook 1.2 has a friendly, flexible interface. Its unlimited annotations, extensive indexing, and Super-Find feature are efficient ways to manage a glut of information. 



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LAYBY for Christmas
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■ Type	Wireless base station
■ Rating	\$\$\$ 1/2
■ Pros	802.11g base station in a small enclosure; easy setup; iTunes music streaming
■ Cons	Audio dropouts in some network configurations; configuring the device sometimes requires a reset to make it appear in AirPort Admin Utility
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$229
■ Publisher	Apple Computer
■ Distributor	Apple Australia 133 622
■ Reviewer	Jeff Carlson
■ Hot links	www.apple.com.au/airportexpress

AirPort Express

Touches down in the living room

IN *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, the alien ships arrive in a variety of shapes – there are wedges, spheres, and even a vessel that looks like an ice-cream cone. Apple apparently got the interstellar memo: the saucer-shaped AirPort Extreme Base Station has now been joined by the compact, rectangular AirPort Express. The Express packs almost as much thrust as its more expensive predecessor and adds an audio-out port and iTunes software, so you can stream your music to any room within range.

Galactic traveller. The AirPort Express's shape isn't significant just because it's in keeping with Apple's recent rounded-rectangle aesthetic (see the iPod and the iMac G5). Rather, it's significant because the box is compact enough to fit easily into a laptop bag.

Measuring 9.1 by 7.3 by 2.8 centimetres and weighing 190 grams, the AirPort Express is only slightly larger than the power adapter that ships with the PowerBook and the iBook. Its flip-out plug attaches to a standard power outlet, so you don't need to carry yet another cable or power brick. (That said, you can get a \$65 kit that includes an extension cord and two audio cables.)

Though smaller, the AirPort Express is similar to the AirPort Extreme, with a few limitations. The Express can handle 10 simultaneous wireless connections, versus the Extreme's 50. Unlike the Extreme, the Express doesn't include a built-in modem. Most noticeably, the Express sports only one 10/100BaseT Ethernet port; if the Express is your only wireless access point (connected to a DSL modem, for example), it can't be used to extend access to wired machines on your network.

The Express can also, however, act as a node in a Wireless Distribution System, stretching your existing AirPort network into areas just beyond your main base station's coverage. The Express also features a USB port that will let you share a compatible printer. Thanks to Rendezvous networking, all I had to do was plug my older Lexmark E312 USB laser printer into the device to print. In fact, to my surprise, that printer isn't officially supported by Apple, and doesn't print when connected to my AirPort Extreme Base Station.

One advantage of the Express over the Extreme: it can store five profiles in its built-in memory, so you could configure one profile for home use, one for office use, and one for use in hotels, without having to re-enter the different settings each time.

Scan the skies. Setting up the device for the first time requires installing the AirPort 4.0 software from the accompanying CD (not to be confused with version 3.4.2, which is what's currently available as a free download to any AirPort user). In the AirPort Express Assistant, you can choose to use the Express as your main wireless gateway or as part of an existing network; the Assistant guides you through the options smoothly.


However you do it, configuring the Express is straightforward and simple. Occasionally in my testing, the Express wouldn't show up as an option. Sometimes connecting via the AirPort icon in the menu bar and then running AirPort Admin Utility did the trick. Other times I had to reset the unit.

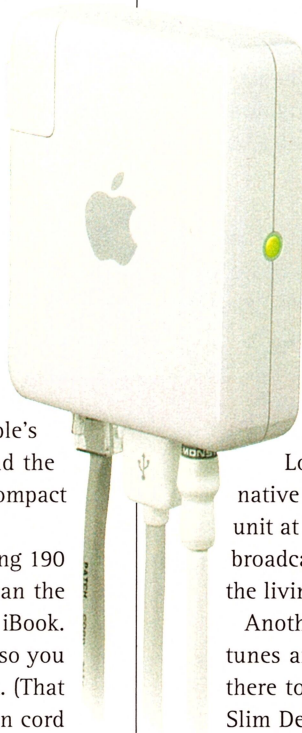
AirTunes, the Express soundtrack. In addition to its portability, what really sets the AirPort Express apart is AirTunes, which lets you stream music from iTunes (on a Mac or a Windows PC) to the Express and from there to your home entertainment hardware, via the unit's mini audio jack. When an AirPort Express is available, each copy of iTunes on the network sprouts a pop-up menu that lets you choose where to send the music.

Because iTunes and the Express use Apple Lossless compression to encode music (rather than native MP3 or AAC), you can stream audio to only one unit at a time; I'd like to see a future version of AirTunes broadcast to multiple AirPort Expresses (for playback in the living room and the kitchen, for example).

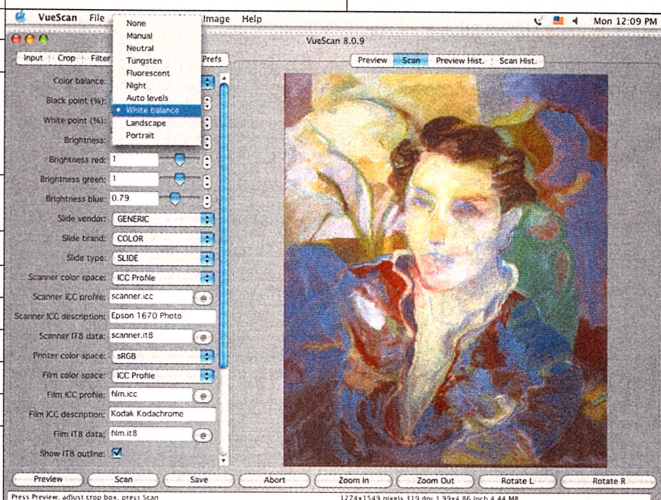
Another limitation is the lack of remote control: if your tunes are on the Mac in your bedroom, you need to go there to change playlists or skip songs. Devices such as Slim Devices' Squeezebox and Roku's SoundBridge give you a local interface.

More importantly, I ran into sporadic playback gaps during my testing. I soon realised that the problem was due to the fact that my home network included both an AirPort Extreme Base Station and the AirPort Express, resulting in a mix of 802.11a and 802.11g signals. Apple has released a software patch for AirPort cards (AirPort Driver Update 2004-08-31) that seems to solve the problem at least partially, but I still experienced dropouts after installing the patch.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you're in the market for an Apple-branded wireless base station, the AirPort Express gives you almost everything the AirPort Extreme offers. Apple has created a product that not only provides a highly functioning 802.11g base station in a portable shell, but also pushes into a new product category. For many people, the AirTunes streaming capability will be a bigger draw than the portability or the price. 



■ Type	Scanner utility
■ Rating	☆☆☆
■ Pros	Very fine but quite manageable controls; excellent previews and colour-management tools; can save raw scan data for reprocessing later; professional tools at a low price
■ Cons	Skimpy documentation too advanced for most non-professionals; doesn't support all scanners
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$US60 standard edition; \$US80 professional edition
■ Publisher	Hamrick Software
■ Distributor	Available online
■ Reviewer	Jim Felici
■ Hot links	www.hamrick.com



VueScan 8.0

Scanner Package Offers Alternative to Generic Software

PROBLEM: your scanner's software is too simplistic, too hard to use, or outdated. Solution: Hamrick's VueScan 8.0.11. VueScan opens the door to professional-quality scanner control, and while it won't make you a pro overnight, it will give you the necessary tools at an amazingly low price.

The program can drive flatbeds, film recorders, and slide scanners using a range of interfaces. Because it replaces default scanner software, it can make older scanners compatible with OS X – no more popping into Classic just to use your venerable scanner. (It even can recognise old SCSI scanners.)

VueScan is available in Standard and Professional versions. At these prices, go pro: colour-calibration tools, a selection of colour spaces, and the ability to save raw scan files (so you'll never have to rescan) are worth the modest price of admission.

In addition to its versatile controls, VueScan offers colour-balancing presets for many common situations, such as colour distortion from fluorescent or incandescent light, washed-out skies in landscape photos, and distorted skin tones. While the ten presets don't cover all situations, they can get you close to the

Colour calibration. VueScan 8.0.11's colour controls did an admirable job on a demanding scan: this slide of an original oil painting (by Jennifer Griffith). The program's many calibration, colour, and brightness controls are augmented by a pop-up list of colour-balance presets.

exposures you're after. You can adjust settings for slides and film negatives, basing them on the type of film used.

All the adjustments you make can be previewed using the raw scan data, so you can tweak individual colour-channel settings, for example, and save variations while keeping the original scan on screen. The preview window is ample and zoomable. An interactive channel-by-channel histogram view of either the preview or the final scan is also available.

VueScan can create ICC profiles for scanners, film, and printers for better colour calibration, and IT8 reference targets are available online for about \$US10. The program's tabbed interface is very easy to navigate, but a more fleshed-out manual would be helpful.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. VueScan 8.0.11 is tremendous value. It can't make great scans automatically, but the Professional version puts them well within reach. Because VueScan works by driving the scanner directly – emulating the command set used by the scanner manufacturers themselves (every command set has to be reverse engineered) – it doesn't work with all scanners. Check Hamrick's compatibility list before diving in.

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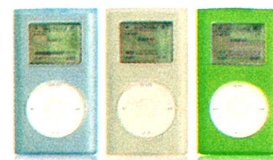
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■ Type	Audio plug-in
■ Rating	■■■■
■ Pros	Intuitive interface; effectively removes a wide range of noise
■ Cons	Doesn't work fully with all Audio Units-compatible applications
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$999
■ Publisher	BIAS
■ Distributor	Major Music 02 9525 2088
■ Reviewer	Christopher Breen
■ Hot links	www.bias-inc.com

SoundSoap Pro 1.0

Professionally scrubs audio

MULTIMEDIA files can be full of superfluous sound — hum, rumble, hiss, crackles, and pops. Until recently, effectively removing this unwanted audio required professional tools that could cost many thousands of dollars. BIAS's SoundSoap Pro offers professional-quality audio restoration in an easy-to-use and relatively affordable plug-in package.

SoundSoap Pro is the professional sibling of BIAS's one-button audio-cleaning program, SoundSoap. Unlike SoundSoap, which can be used either as a stand-alone application or as a plug-in for other audio applications, SoundSoap Pro is available only as a plug-in. It supports the VST, RTAS, and Audio Units formats; no TDM version is currently available.

From within BIAS's Peak 4.12 audio editor, we tested SoundSoap Pro on a 78-rpm phonograph recording; a video file recorded with a cheap, hissy microphone; and a video clip shot at a nearby airport with jets roaring in the background. The program easily removed the antique album's pops and crackles and significantly reduced its hiss without wiping out the high frequencies. It performed just as well at removing the cheap mike's hiss while retaining the quality of the speaker's voice. With the airport clip, we had to tweak individual frequencies to avoid a flanging effect, but we eventually removed much (though not all) of the engine drone while leaving the narrator's voice sounding natural.

Modular design. SoundSoap Pro consists of four intuitive modules: Hum & Rumble, Click & Crackle, Broadband, and Noise Gate. BIAS suggests that you use the modules in that order — first eliminating the most-obvious problems, such as hum and pops, and then attacking broader ranges of noise. (Of course, you don't have to use a module if you don't need it.) We found that this workflow was very easy.

The Hum & Rumble and Click & Crackle modules couldn't be more intuitive: you simply turn them on and then use sliders to zero in on the offending material.



Noises off. SoundSoap Pro's easy-to-use interface has a main pane (top) that shows the module currently in use. The smaller panes (bottom) let you switch between the four modules.

To use the Broadband module, you select a portion of the file that contains the noise you want to remove, click on the Learn Noise button, and start playing the file; the plug-in then creates a filter that eliminates the noise. The Learn Noise feature cleaned much of the noise from our phonograph and cheap-microphone recordings. We had to do more work to filter noise from particular frequency ranges in our airport video (you can make adjustments within 12 frequency bands).

The final module, Noise Gate, is designed to eliminate any sounds that fall below a certain volume threshold. You might, for example, use it to eliminate soft intakes of breath in a narration track.

SoundSoap Pro lets you save and load presets and capture and recall as many as four configurations you've created. A Noise Only feature lets you hear only the noise you've removed — useful for determining when you've removed too much of the good audio.

SoundSoap Pro performed well from within BIAS's Peak. BIAS says the app is fully compatible with Apple's Logic Pro 6 and Logic Express and with MOTU's Digital Performer 4; its full interface also appeared for us from within Apple's GarageBand and Digidesign's Pro Tools LE 6.4.

We wish that its interface were available in all Audio Units-compatible applications. In programs that don't support plug-ins with custom interfaces (Apple's Final Cut Pro, for example), you have to use a series of non-intuitive sliders to control the plug-in.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. SoundSoap Pro combines powerful noise reduction with an easy-to-use interface, and it costs significantly less than other professional solutions, such as Waves' Restoration Bundle. If you need to scrub the noise from your files without getting soaked, a dab of SoundSoap Pro may be the audio cleaner you need.

■ Type	Optical disc cataloguing device
■ Rating	★★★ 1/2
■ Pros	Easy to set up; easy to use; inexpensive; fast
■ Cons	No automatic detection of disc names; no manual entry for disc contents
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$199
■ Manufacturer	imation
■ Distributor	Imation ANZ 1800 225 013
■ Reviewer	Matthew JC. Powell
■ Hot links	www.imation.com.au/stakka



Imation Disc Stakka

Great idea, needs a bit of polish

I HAVE a lot of discs. In my job they seem to multiply of their own accord, and keeping track of them is like my second career.


The imation Disc Stakka is designed for people like me. It offers a searchable database of all your disks and, even better, a place to put them.

It's an ingenious device. All you do is install the software, then plug the Stakka into a free USB port on your computer or a powered hub (because it draws power from USB you can't attach it to a non-powered hub or a free port on your keyboard). Then you simply put discs in and tell the OpdiTracker software what they are.

Unfortunately the Stakka isn't actually a drive as such, so it has no facility to read the discs at all. You have to type the name of the disc manually and identify the type of disc it is. The Stakka also cannot identify the contents of the disc, so if you want to be able to search for a particular file on one of your discs, you have to insert the disc into the drive on your Mac.

Once you've done that, though, the entry in the database is updated with full info on the contents of up to 100 discs. You can even stack additional Stakkas for greater capacity – thousands of discs can be instantly searchable. I filled a Stakka with the entire series of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and its spin-off, *Angel*, and found I could retrieve any disc within seconds.

The one serious criticism of the Stakka has to do with the software. You have to enter the names of discs manually, and the software doesn't warn you if you've got duplicate names – you could theoretically call every disc the same thing and never be able to find any of them. Despite having to enter disc names manually, there's no way to enter disc contents manually. Since all video DVDs have essentially the same filenames on them, this can be rather unhelpful. A facility to type in the names of episodes on my *Buffy* discs would be nice to see in some future revision.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you have hundreds of data CDs lying around unsorted and uncatalogued – and especially if you can't find the covers anymore – the Disk Stakka will make your life so much easier. At the price, there's no reason not to. 

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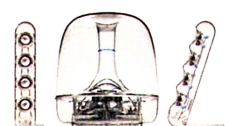
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■ Type	File-transfer utility
■ Rating	★★★★½
■ Pros	Fast; efficient file synchronisation; tabbed windows
■ Cons	Interface could be clearer; no support for HTTPS, WebDAV, or Secure Copy
■ OS X	Yes
■ RRP	\$US39
■ Manufacturer	Stairways Software
■ Distributor	Available online
■ Reviewer	Andrew T Laurence
■ Hot links	www.stairways.com

Interarchy 7.2

Aids power users

WE live in an internet world, and occasionally that means moving files over the ether. Web developers need to upload their work to web servers, authors and graphic designers need to keep synchronised with far-flung collaborators, and sometimes we need to send files that are too darn big for e-mail.

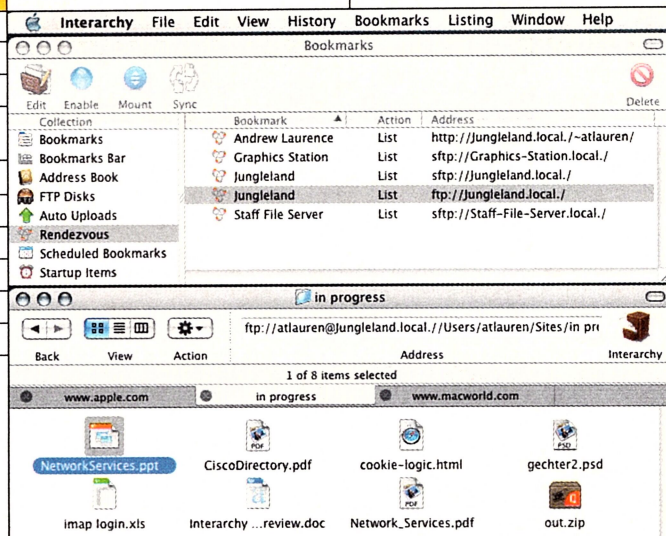
Interarchy began life in 1993 as Anarchie, a program for transferring files using File Transfer Protocol (FTP). Alas, an unwise foray into interface skins marred Interarchy's middle years, and the initial OS X versions abandoned the network tools on which so many alpha geeks had come to rely. Meanwhile, our comparison review last year showed that relative newcomers RBrowser and Panic's Transmit had redefined the FTP landscape. Now, at version 7.2, Interarchy returns with a fresh new interface and a bevy of network tools. What began as a simple FTP program has matured into a Swiss Army chain saw for the power user's toolbox.

File transfers. Interarchy handles basic FTP operations with practiced aplomb. You can download, upload, and create files and folders, as well as manage permissions, quickly and without surprises. Additional encryption options include support for the Secure FTP (SFTP) protocol and tunnelling FTP sessions through a Secure Shell (SSH) connection.

Interarchy offers three methods for keeping files synchronised with a server. Mirror copies all files between a local folder and the server by downloading, uploading, or synchronising the files. FTP Disk is an automated mirror that mounts as a disk icon in the Finder; it copies any changed files to the other side of the mirror. Designate a folder with the new Auto Upload function, and Interarchy becomes an upload droplet; drop a file therein onto Interarchy, and that file automatically uploads.

Interarchy recognises that web developers need to do more than move files around. HTTP Download quickly downloads a web page (or an entire site) to your hard drive. The link checker scans local files and remote sites, and even verifies links to external sites. The HTTP Listing function lists a web page's core objects in a window, quickly identifying all of the page's links, style sheets, and images.

You can execute transfer operations immediately, bookmark or schedule them for later, or put them into a transfer queue. The last option executes transfers in a series, maximising bandwidth for each transfer; you can also schedule queues.



Flexible access. Interarchy can download files using multiple protocols from different internet sites.

Interarchy doesn't support FTP over SSL/TLS encryption, HTTPS, WebDAV, and the Unix Secure Copy (SCP) function.

Interface, integration, and automation. Version 7.2 embraces the modern world with Safari-style tabbed windows and a bookmark bar. This innovation is a breath of fresh air that facilitates management of file spaces on multiple servers. You can drag files to and from the Finder, or copy them to the system's download folder. The interface is perhaps a bit too clean, though – I'd like to see buttons for initiating a transfer.

The Bookmarks window includes nearby Rendezvous servers and any Address Book entries that include web sites. You can store passwords in the Keychain by just selecting an option. The Get URL With Interarchy contextual menu makes Interarchy available to any application that supports contextual-menu plug-ins.

Interarchy's AppleScript support remains superb, and its dictionary is a model of clarity. The command-line tool injects Interarchy's full functionality into the Terminal environment – even offering Keychain support.

Network information. Interarchy offers several tools for network analysis and administration. The Network Host Info command queries the network for DNS, mail transfer, whois records, and ping results, all of which it displays in an expandable Get Info-style window. Traceroute and port scan operations are mouse-clicks away. While this information is available in Apple's Network Utility, Interarchy puts it all into one efficient window.

If you need to see just how much data you're pushing through the network, Interarchy's Network Status window shows a graphical display and statistical summary of all traffic. Network Connections offers a list of open connections in a friendlier format than Network Utility's netstat output.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you need only basic FTP abilities, Interarchy 7.2 is probably overkill. If your needs include encryption, web transfers, automation, and network monitoring, Interarchy rolls together an impressive array of tools at an attractive price. 🍷

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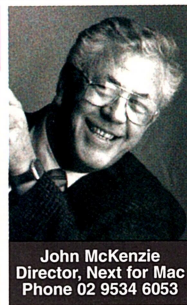
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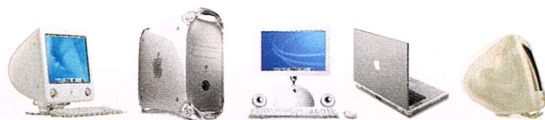
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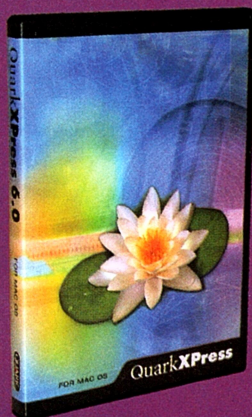
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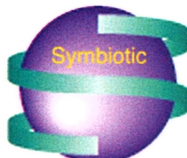
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Something to chew on.

By Alex Rieneck.

Is this bush week? Already?

KNOW I'm vague. I'm used to that special look of incredulity that people in banks and chemists and offices get when I look at them and apologetically say, "Is today the 12th?" Sometimes I say "March?" if I think that it is March. I'm used to the look of shock and replies ranging from <shock>"June"</shock> all the way through to <shock><weirdo>"October"</shock> and the subsequent lowering in the quality of service that happens when one becomes identified as a month-ignorant weirdo.

It's worse when I can't remember what year it is. Really. I can bask in a glow of normality until the end of January. By the middle of February people have started looking at me funny. In May, I am a worry. Anything past June, and I am suspected of being a werewolf. The sad thing is that I am used to it. I know that if I worked in a bank that had one of those large calendar thingies on the wall, that I would start treating the whole thing more seriously. Simple proximity to the facts would probably result in me accepting what day it was and whether it was the seventh month, or the second. Given practice I could probably even get over my habit of writing things like "September" really, really, small into the space on forms designed for a number. Never fails to attract dubious looks, that one.

Anyway, is it my fault that I get the 21/03/04 mixed up with the 02/12/02? Or the 06/06/44 with the 13/12/78 or even 9/11/01 with 11/09/01? How about when people get really anal and start adding in the digital time so that 06/10/04 becomes 21:21 06/10/04? I start thinking that I have died and been sentenced to some demented real time simulation called "Algebra in Real Life". I have been known to start trying to add the time to the square root of the month in order to produce some form of answer arcane enough to cause the customer service bot to spontaneously reboot.

I will admit it. It is a problem. In my defence I will state that I practically always know what day of the week it is. I know for example that today is Tuesday. At the very worst, if I don't know, I only need reminding once or maybe twice. In a day. After all, the days of the week each have their own precise resonances; from the stodgy habitual Wednesday to the barely veiled anticipation of Friday.



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Handy gadget for measuring how much real estate things take up on your screen

The thing is that Apple, maker of the world's finest computers, have the whole sorry mess rectum skywards. The little clock thingie up in the top left hand corner of my screen tells me that it is Tuesday and that it is 11.31 AM. These are useful facts, I will admit. They explain why yesterday's Sunday boat races were so poorly attended and also why I keep thinking about food.

The thing is of course that they don't deliver the information that I actually want. After all, I know what day it is. I want to know the date, and maybe the month, and perhaps, I confess (if it's a Saturday), the year. I want to be able to know all these things without having to click in the upper right hand corner of my screen, however many times a day.

I mean, I could live without the Australian flag up there. Like, it is nice and everything, but what am I supposed to do? Salute?

I mentioned some of this to the editor of this magazine a few days ago, and he muttered something about the "System Preferences pane" and looked at me with that "are you a werewolf?" look that he gets and went back to searching through a pile of Buffy DVDs. He is one of those people who just know the date. Mostly.

The problem is that there is no way of fixing the date in the "System Preferences pane", there is only no date, or a 120 x 120 pixel lump gets in the way more efficiently than a hungry cat. Basically the people at Apple are of the opinion that Mac users are so dumb that they need continual

reminding of what day of the week that it is, but somehow just know, by lycanthropy or something, what the date is.

I'm not alone in this. There is a Konfabulator widget that sits just under the menu bar and displays the date in a convenient way, unless Konfabulator has gotten turned off due to incessant whining about money. Why should having the date in the corner of my screen cost the extra fifty bucks to register Konfabulator? I think if Apple can manage to "acquire" the idea of Konfabulator for Tiger, it should be able to tweak the System Preferences pane and the menu bar and just show the cockamamie date already. After all why not?

Sometimes I wish I was a bloody werewolf. ☠

Alex Rieneck has been a technology commentator since the days of the bone abacus.

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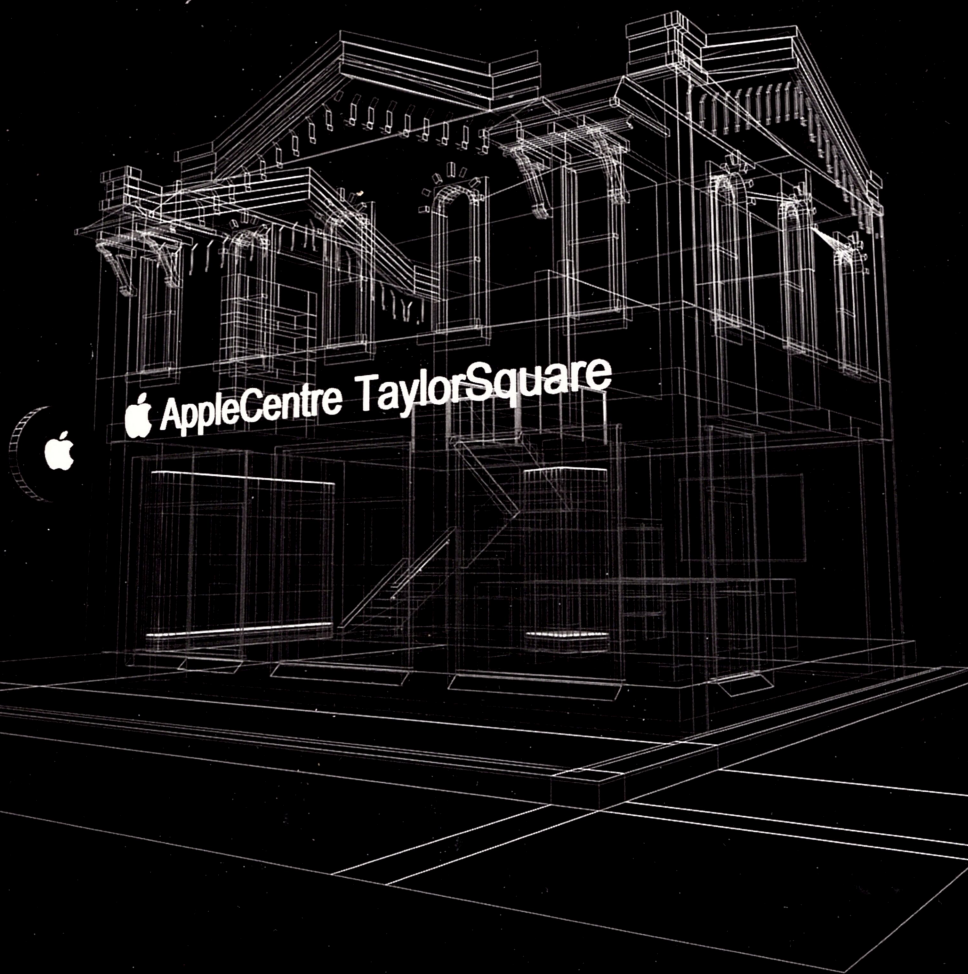
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